MARGET POW IN FOREIGN PARTS

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MARGET POW IN FOREIGN PARTS

BY

CATHERINE PONTON SLATER

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TO

MY SISTER

JESSY

THE DEAR FELLOW-TRAVELLER

WHO HAS OVER-PASSED ME IN THE WAY

AND NOW RESTS

THROUGH the courtesy of the Proprietors of the *Scots Pictorial*, those letters of Marget Pow which appeared in its pages, are included in this little volume.

CAVENDISH SQUARE, LONDON,
January 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—I now put pen to paper to send you all parteeclars of our grand trip.

The new cook here is a Mrs. M'Clumpha, and you will be dumbfoundered when you hear what Mrs. M'Clumpha she is. Well, if you will believe me, her man was good-brother to Mr. Borthwick—she's a Haddington woman hersel', and so is he—and her lassie is married on Alec Wilson's John, him that's the game-keeper up at Burnie, and many a time have I seen her sittin' in Dunbar Free Kirk in the summer-time, with a thing in her best bonnet for all the world like a sweep's besom. And here she is in Lady Lindesay's kitchen, very near as broad as she's long. It's a big kitchen, and ill to keep clean. The

kitchen-maid is just a lassie, and figure her speakin' high English as if she was a lady! I hope I know my place better than to speak either French or English: but the sairvants here are terrible upsettin'.

See and no let the sweeps stramp over the new-vairnished floors with their muckle feet, and be canny when it comes to washing the best china. What for our ladies were so set to go to Italy exackly at the cleaning-time, it beats me to tell. I understand the Pope is settled in Rome now, poor old gentleman, so there was no siccan a hurry to see *him*. But if I am spared to get back to my own town, it's the first and the last the Pope will see of me, and that I'll certifee.

Would you believe that I never knew when we crossed the Border, and me no been further south than Galashiels before!

Miss Jean says to me, "You're over the Border now, Margaret," says she. I never let on that I hadn't notticed the difference, but I jaloused that something had happened, for the train gave an awfu bounce, and very

near upset the man that was nippin' our tickets all to nonsense. I saw a field of turnips in England the very same as the one next Oldhamstocks Church; but, when you think on it, one neep is very like another at the green end.

We were all on the queevee when we got near London, and what with the cabs, and the porters, and the luggage, and Lady Lindesay's grand footman, my head was in a creel till we were all safe landed in Cavendish Square. A very genteel locality. Lady Lindesay is keepin' fine, and I never can get out of my head that she's just Miss Murray still, she's that young and fresh-looking. I felt like to greet when she kissed me, and called me "dear old Margaret," her that was the first bairn I brought up, and thankit me for makin' up my mind to go all the way to Rome with the young ladies. I am sure a month at Peebles or the Bridge of Allan would have been far wiser-like for a dalicate young lady like Miss Jean, but the doctor said Italy, and Italy I suppose it mun be. If I can get her and Miss Celandine safe home

without turning nuns or marrying Italian blagyards, I am sure I'll be thankful, so no more at present from your affectionate friend,

MARGET POW.

CAVENDISH SQUARE, LONDON,
January 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—I didna forget that I promised to tell you all about the bairns at Cavendish Square, but I've been real busy, what with winding up my watch, and one thing and another. You'll mind the watch Miss Celandine gave me to take with me on my traivels ? She bought it in a bicycle shop, and she's had to buy me a bag to carry it in, it's that big. It takes very near two minutes to wind it up, and Miss Celandine says she can hear the racket it makes down in the drawing-room. It's a good watch, though, loud in the tick, and plain in the face. It aye minds me of one I saw in a shop-window in Dunbar High Street in the summer-time.

Two wee bairns were lookin' in, and the one says, "My faither has a watch as big as that"; "Yer a leear," says the other, and away they toddled as friendly as you like. Bairns are no parteeclar.

Master Johneen is four now, and Miss Cielle is six. The first I saw of them they were carryin' a black-and-white cat and two wee kitlings betwixt them. They both held up their bonny wee faces for a kiss, and then Master Johneen says, "Our cat is a widow with two young children." "Dearie me," says I, astonished-like, and 'deed I couldna but wonder what had put it into their heads. They said their Mother had told them, and they were so taken up with petting the poor beasties that they could think about nothing else. Master Johneen is grown, and Miss Jean is lamenting sore that there's no baby for her to cuddle now. I never saw any young lady so set on infants as she is. I mind fine when she was a wee lassie, no' any older than Miss Cielle, she used to coax her poor Mamaw to get a real baby for her to play with; and one day when Mrs. Murray put her off with

"How can I get a baby for you, Jean?" she said, "Couldn't you *pray* for one, Mother?" Poor wee lassie; she little thought what the baby, (that was Miss Celandine,) was to cost. The loss of their Mamaw has been a fearfu' miss to the young ladies; and the Colonel might have been some use too for takin' the tickets, and seein' after the luggage: but a sojer is a handless character away from the guns; and what with the loss of his head through going too near the enemy, and one thing and another, he never come home to his orphan weans.

Look in the top drawer of the chest-of-drawers in the back spare-room. There's six blue-and-white checked ones in the left hand corner, near the front; that's no' them; but they're farther back.—Yours affectionately,

MARGET POW.

CAVENDISH SQUARE, LONDON,
January 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—Our young ladies has decided to stop here a whilie, so I'll can tell you all about the strange and manifold sights of London.

Firstly, the colour of the washings is beyond the power of pen to describe; and, unless you were to see it with the naked eye, you would never believe the drumlie, grey, dirty colour poor Lady Lindesay's napery is now! I would be black-affronted to see such awfu-like things hanging out in our back-green. But everything is sent out to the Lady's Lily-white Laundry, so what can ye expeck? Mrs. M'Clumpha says the gairden is too dirty for bleaching in—fair black wi' soot—and nobody takes a daunder in it except the cat.

I have been away seeing Westminster Abbey the day, it being considered one of the foremost sights of London. Miss Celandine took me.

Appearingly there's been a deal of mortality among the high faimlies in England since it was built, for it's fair crammed with tombstones, Kings and Queens being included. We paid sixpence each to be let through an iron gate, and when once we were through, a tall genteel-looking gentleman in a black gown attended upon us to tell us all about the monuments, tombs, sepulchres, graves, and other objecks of interest. There was a good few ladies and gentlemen kept company with Miss Celandine and me, and they were aye askin' questions about one thing and another, and pittin' off the gentleman's time: he was a Verger, it appeared, and he said he would be needed to verge at three in the efternoon: he was gey short in the temper, too, and couldna abide the folk no keepin' close to his heels:—"Keep near me, ladies and gentlemen," says he, "if you wish to hear what I have to say." But, if you'll believe me, he spoke such high English that I couldna understan' the half he said—and him no more than a Minister's man! He showed us tomb upon tomb till I was fair wearied: a lot of the

graven images on the monuments was lying flat on their backs with their feet on their pet lions—poor beasties! (I wouldna care to keep one mysel'.) Some of them had dogs to stick their soles against. A very stylish tombstone represented a family group:—the old gentleman and his lady were lying side by side on the top floor, like, and the six young gentlemen were kneeling down below, three and three, on six hassocks with tossels at the corners. They were all dressed the same—knickerbockers, awfu full in the legs, and armour on the top—warmish, I'm thinkin'. The hassocks with the tossels were as like as life, mind you, and all made of stone! I was thinkin' I would mebbe make one for my seat in the Kirk; a bit carpet on the top, and worsit tossels would look fine: I never saw that style in Edinburgh, but ye need to traivel to find out the new fashions.

The best thing we saw was near the last—no less than the Coronating chair. And what do you think it is made of? Naething more nor less than a stone the English took from the Scotch folk! Dear peety me! could

they no hae gotten a stone to theirsels? They call it the stone of Destiny, but I'm no sure where that is; down the West Coast, mebbe. I couldna see that it was onyway wonderfu; I had a first cousin that was a sculpterer down Leith Walk, and, if you'll believe me, I've seen dizens of stones the very same in his yaird. It must have been a heavy carry; but, no doubt, it was long afore the days of chairging for extry luggage—a perfeck imposeetion. There's four gold lions, wi' long curly tails, for feet, and they've put a bit wood over the stone for fear the Kings and Queens that sit on it might catch the cold; "Them that sit on stane, are twice fain"; fain to sit down, and fain to rise up again, as many a day I've felt mysel', sittin' on the rocks at Dunbar, with the bairns diggin' holes in the beach by the hour thegither.

There's forty poor widows gets something to theirsels once a week in the Presinks; it will be what the lawyers call a "mortification" in Scotland, viz. when folks leaves their money to the poor, and no to their own relations. Every one of them gets 1½ lbs.

of the best beef, a 4-lb. loaf of bread; and tuppence in coppers: my certy!

The very last thing we saw was the monument to Sir John Franklin, who was conneckit, more or less, with the North. The gentleman read the Hepitawph (that'll be what they call the text in London), and it sounded real bonny. Miss Celandine has written it down the way he said it; she is an obliging young lady, when she's not on the nonsense. It is poetry; viz.—

> "Not 'ere; the wite Nawth 'olds thy bones,
> An' thou, 'eroic sailor soul!
> Hart passin' on thy nappier voyage now
> Towards no hearthly goal."

With which solemn words I must conclude.

The young ladies sends their kind regairds to you and Merran.—Yours sincerely,

MARGET POW.

CAVENDISH SQUARE, LONDON,
January 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—Me and the lady's-maid has been away seeing Madam Tooso's Wax-works: Lady Lindesay sent us: you pay a shilling to get in, and stay as long as you like. But Thomson had to be back at seven o'clock to dress her ladyship for a pairty, so we were just a jimp four hours at the exhibeetion. Susan is the lady's-maid's name, but she aye gets "Thomson"; it's the fashion in high faimlies appearingly. She's a nice, douce, young woman, but pure English, poor thing.

And who do you think we met in the bus but a Scotchman! A real decent old body, fresh-coloured, and well put on. "Hoo much dae ye chairge to Madam Tooso's?" says he, real canny-like; and I'm thinkin' that, if it had been more than a penny, he would have got out and walked. But there's many an Englisher that would have gotten in and

never asked the fare—so they would: no wonder London is just filled with beggars.

The wax-works are numerous:—Kings and Queens by the dizen; old and young, black and white, as like as life. It made me fair dizzy to see such a lot of folk at once, and no a few of them the very same as we had seen lying on their graves at Westminster Abbey, parteeclarly Mary Queen of Scots: there she sat in a black velvet gown, with Mr. J. Knox standin' beside her. Little thought she, poor lady, that she would end in a wax-work, and him too.

There was a French lady (I dinna mind on her name) that had a bonny pink silk tea-gown on: it would take fourteen yairds to make one the same to Miss Jean; Thomson said you would need fourteen and a half, or mebbe fifteen, but lady's-maids are aye wasterfu'. It was thinnish—3s. 11d. a yaird, I would jalouse; you would likely get the dress-piece for 50s.

Downstairs we saw a grand tablow of Queen Victoria receiving the two gentlemen that came to tell her that her Uncle was dead.

They were kneeling in front of her, and, comin' away in the middle of the night, it was mebbe no wonder that their boots hadna been blacked. The poor young lady was gey sleepy-looking; she had on a white shawl that should have been in the wash-tub lang syne; it would be the first she could find. Many's the time I've told you and Merran never to wait to be told to wash the young ladies' shawls; everything that is dirty is ready to be washed, and I'm sure you would have been affronted if you had seen one of *our* young ladies in sic a like shawl as poor Queen Victoria is being handed down to prosperity in.

We saw André in a balloon, seeking for the North Pole; it must be an awfu height.

Then we saw General Gordon being shot; and the two wee Princes in the Tower that was murdered; and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots; it's a very enjoyable exhibeetion.

Finally we had our teas in the Restorong, at a table wi' as many legs as a centipede, and came away home.

Do you mind of Miss M'Neil that was at

the school with Lady Lindesay ? Well, she's dead. But they've ereckit a window to her memory in St. Album's Church, where she worshipped. It's a great big window with a picture of Noah's Ark on it : (she was aye fond of animals—parteeclarly cats :) the birds and beasts are comin' out two by two, very neat and reglar-like : there's a stag and a roe prancin' over the door-step, and bears, elephants, geese, giraffes, swans, and camels comin' down the hill ; glad to get out, poor beasties.

It'll no be long now till we set sail for France ! if ever we get safe back again, I'm thinkin' it will be more by good luck than good guidin' ! If I'm spared I'll need new flannen petticoats next winter : the way they've shrunk mine's at the Lady's Lily-white Laundry is a perfeck disgrace. I was tellin' Miss Celandine about them, and she says, " The trials that afflict the just, in number many are." She's aye for the poetry, but that's in a psalm.

My kind regairds to all inquirin' friends,

MARGET POW.

HOTEL VICTORIA, PISA,
February 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—At long and at last we've crossed the English Channel. What a work folk make about nothing! You might just as well get into a pavee when you were takin' the boat to Burntisland—it is no that much further—and when I keeked out half-roads the water looked the very same as the Firth of Forth; I must say I was disappointed. Then, when we set foot on a foreign shore, and went birlin' away to Paris, the very first station I read up was Creil, and 'deed the whole country was just as like Fife as need be. But there's an awfu odds on the language; that's a fack. There was a woman came to my room-door at a place they call Deeshong, and she rapped and cried, "Say lo shode, Madame." Thinks I to mysel', "I'll say naething of the sort—not without I ken what it means"; so I lay quiet. In a meenit she rapped again and cried louder, "Say lo

shode." "Havers!" says I, and in she came with a jug of hot water, and stood smiling, appearingly waiting for me to say something. Then I minded that Miss Jean told me always to say "Mercy" when I didna ken what folk said: so "Mercy," says I, loud and plain, and away she went quite pleased. Daft, mebbe, but I'm no sure.

Paris is a big town, and there's a great big church in it. Of course Miss Jean was set to go to it, and nothing would halt her, although it wasna the Sabbath-Day nor anything like it, and me in my every-day bonnet, and the skirt on that I got dyed black for efternoons. The minister was a stoutish gentleman, about fifty or thereaway, and the sermon was a good length; but I couldna make out what the subjeck of the discourse was, what with the language, and one thing and another.

Many a mile we've travelled syne. It's a long hurl from Paris to Pisa, and we stopped at three towns in the by-going. What hills for height we saw on the road here! all ice and snow on the top—no use whatever; and

we went through an awfu length of a tunnel; they call it the Mong Snee tunnel.

It was at a place called Tureen that we saw the two Miss Duffs that worship in the East Church. You'll mind the old ladies that Mary Campbell's sister's niece was housemaid to? It was them. They were sittin' at a nasty shoogly wee table takin' their breakfasts, or as much breakfast as they could get, anyway. I wasna sure at first that it was them, for I never saw them afore wantin' their bonnets; but one of them was readin' the *Scotsman*, and she lookit over the paper at the other one, and, says she, "Charlotte, guess who's dead?" The minute she spoke I knew her; there's something about the language that makes ye ken the Edinburgh folk fine.

I'm glad to hear you're both keepin' well. See and no loss the cat the time we're away: Miss Jean is aye askin' about it.—Your affectionate friend,

MARGET POW.

VEEBABONY STREET, ROME,
February 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—Figure me in Rome! "The Infernal City," as they call it; doomed to destruction on account of being seetiated on seven hills, and filled cram-full (as I understan') of idolators and other Bedevilments. I've been expeckin' an earthquake very near every day, and I aye keep my flannen petticoat on a chair next my bed at night, ready to flee in. I've let down one of the tucks, no being wishfu to look like a ballet-dancer at my latter end; I'll need to put a false hem, though (if I'm spared), and I'll no soon forget the Lady's Lily-white Laundry—set them up!

What do you think was the first name I saw over a door in the town? No less than Colonna Ciceri! You'll mind Andrea Ciceri, who keepit the High-class ice-cream Saloon in Dunbar High Street, with "Fried Potatoes" above the left-hand window?

He'll be a friend of he's—mebbe a first cousin : it's a queer thing, but go where you like, you'll aye fall in with somebody that you ken something about.

Miss Jean says we're livin' in a palace. It is the first time I ever heard tell of a palace up a common stair. No doubt the steps are marble, and there's a good few of them ; but I've been up a stair in the High Street with seventeen more.

We landed in the middle of the night, and the folk that keep the pension were all in their beds except a laddie no above sixteen year old, in a black dress-coat rideeclously long in the waist, and a white tie. He gave us our suppers, and, for all there was to eat, he might just as well have been in his bed too, instead of standin' glowerin' at us like a wull-cat :—cold roast mutton, bread and cheese, and soddy-water in a sighfone—nesty things ; naething but a whiffle of wind, or else squirkin' all over the cloth and making a mess.

Yes : we saw the leaning tower the day we were at Pisa ; it's no straight, I must say that. The folk at the hotel were real set to

know if the man that built it meant it to lean. I would think no! if it had been *meant* to lean, it wouldna have leant—no it. I was tellin' Miss Celandine that, and she says the Tower is a notable instance of the innate cussedness of matter; she'll have got that out of the Guide-book, I'm thinking.

We were shown the gasoliery that made a man called Gallyleeo invent a clock. It is in the church that Mr. and Mrs. Gallyleeo attended, and it seems that the gasoliery used to swee like a pendulum; there must have been an awfu draught; but a knock's a useful thing too, so it is.

Miss Celandine's real ill about the way the folk in the hotels cleans her boots. She says I am to send you the directions, and you are to mind and *never* follow them. This is what she has written down:—"To clean ladies' boots. Remove carefully all traces of polish with a damp cloth, smearing the leather as completely as possible. Then, with a piece of clean flannel, apply the blacking freely to the boot-laces only, and deliver at the bedroom door."

They're tellin' me the Pope's no a married gentleman; he's just what they call a celebrate, like. I heard a deal about him yon time the Rev. Mr. MacTavish was preachin' about graven images in the Established Church. I dinna mind of seeing any mysel'; but they are unchancy things, and I hope they'll no get creepin' into the Auld Kirk.

See you and Merran take your Sundays out reglar; a Continental Sabbath is no much better nor a Setterday.

With kind regairds.—Yours old friend,

MARGET POW.

VEEABONE COMPANY STREET, ROME,
February 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—We flitted on Monday to a top flat in a place they call Veeabone Company Street—fine and open. It's a queer thing what a lot of the names of the streets here begins with a "V." It'll be owing to

some peculiarity of the Italian language, I'm thinkin'.

We came here on account of a lift there is to save Miss Jean the long climb; and much need, for there's a hundred and forty-eight steps up—marble every one of them, as sure as I'm here, and it just a common stair! But they'll no get me to go into yon thing; I'm no the kind of a woman to go sweein' up like a canary-bird in a cage, thank ye! and the man that pulls the string is an awfu down-lookin' chiel, with both eyes gleyed, and a mouth like the de'il pu'in heather.

It's a big flat when you get up to it, and the three ladies it belongs to take in six paying guests and one terrier dog. They keep two servants forbye a stout young mairrit woman that comes in by the day; I don't know what her right name is; she aye gets "Linda." The cook is an auld body, and the table-maid is a widow-woman. Strange to say, none of them can speak a word of English: it's an awfu drawback to the conversation.

There's queer things goes on here, and the

very dog has been away to the church to be blessed, and me with him. His name is James, and he's no a bonny dog, but real respectable-lookin' : I don't know exackly what kind of a dog he is ; Miss Celandine is real fond of dogs, but she says she never saw one the same shape before. He belongs to an English lady—Miss Thomson. She's free and pleasant, and she says she likes fine to hear me speaking ; I'm sure it's a cheap treat for her, decent body. So away I went with her and James, although, mind you, I was raither uneasy about encouraging such a carry-on.

It was one of the days they call a Feastable, and a feck of folks was on the same business as us. The big beasts, such as horses, cows, calves, cuddies, pownies, and other quadrupeds, were outside the Church, but the wee animals was admitted. Up came the priest in full dress, and an anchorite with him, carrying the holy water. They stopped in front of James, but the poor beastie turned his back, and when he felt the water squirtin' over him he lookit up at his mistress as much as to

say, "I doubt we'll hae rain," and was in an unco hurry to be off. It was as much as we could do to get him to bide till the prayer was said, and by the time it was done, he had the string Miss Thomson was holdin' him by wound about her feet like to trip her; she had on elastic-sided boots with patent leather toes and white cotton stockings, so you and Merran needna laugh at me. I wished I had had Tatty with me; she's such a meek cat, she would have acted it fine.

Cover comfortably with water and rejuce to a pulp; but I can easy see that it will just need to be all done over again once I get back.—Yours sincerely,

MARGET POW.

VIA BON COMPAGNI, ROMA,
March 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—See and no affront yourself with sending such a daft-like address again.

Just you copy what I put at the head of my letter. "*Via*" means a street — anybody might have jaloused that—but no doubt it's easier to learn the language when you're in the place.

We have been greatly blessed in the weather the time we've been in Rome—not a single earthquake! I'm thinkin' Italy is no near so shoogly as what folks try to make out; and, speakin' about shoogly, would you believe that I've never seen more than one drunk man in Rome? and he was not exackly what you would call drunk, but just a wee thing tozy-mozy like, as Mansie would say. Mind you that's a queer thing, for the folk are aye drinkin' wine!

I'll be glad when the young ladies have seen all the picturs and the churches in Rome, for I'm fair *sick* of them. I'll warrant there are twice as many picturs as what there is in the National Picture Gallery in Edinburgh, and mebbe more. There's hundreds of picturs of the Virgin, and no two of them alike; I canna understan' that. There's a good few saints and martyrs has had their picturs

painted too, puir things; I daursay we've seen five oil paintins, in broad gold frames, of the same thin, old gentleman glowrin' at a scull (I dinna mind his name); he must have been set on gettin' hissel' taken. I never had my caird done but once, at Portobella on the Queen's Birthday; it was like, all except the face.

It was a portrait of a young lady we were away seein' to-day, and Miss Celandine gave me her history. Chenchy was her last name —a high family in Rome. It seems that her poor Papaw was a very difficult gentleman to get on with, and a fair torment in the house. Mebbe her Mamaw was a bad manager, and changed her sairvants every six months like the folk next door: I wouldna wonder: but, any way, they were not a comfortable family. At long and at last, after an extry rippat, the old gentleman was found dead in his bed, and it was easy seen that it was by no wish of he's. Well, they sent for the pollis-officers, and if they didna take up the puir innocent lassie, and off with her head. Nasty, cruel fellies! I couldna bear to look

at the pictur—such a bonny bit thing she was, with a waesome look on her face that very near garred me greet.

I was thankfu' to get home again; I was that tired I went up the stair in the lift. Miss Jean gave the Konserge a *bête-noir*, as the French call it, to take extry care of me, and I took a good grip of the seat with both hands; but I was in a trem'le the whole way up, and glad to get a sit-down and my tea when I landed.

The young ladies are keepin' well, but I dinna think Miss Jean's sight is just right, and I'm kind of uneasy about it. When we were lookin' at the picturs to-day she called one of them an "old Master," and, as sure as I'm here, it was a woman in a low-bodied gown, tight in the waist, with long sleeves and starched frills at the hands, sittin' at an open windy, and a shower comin' on! She canna be seeing right.

Miss Celandine is fine. She says she would like to be married on a Cardinal, but she's doubting if she will get the chance; I hope no; she would make a daft-like Minister's

wife. My best respecks to Mr. M'Duigald.—Your affectionate friend,

MARGET POW.

P.S.—We were away seeing a celebrated church this morning, round-shaped, with a hole in the roof, I canna mind the name of it. The most remarkable featur about the edifice is the number of cats in the vicinity, viz. inside and out. We counted seven airing themselves round about the church, and there was other five inside. The most of them was young married ladies appearingly, so I doubt it will be a while before they'll can get them exterminated. There was a bonny black one asleep on one of the altars. Miss Jean says she thinks she has heard of cats being worshipped :—

> "The heathen in his blindness
> Bows down to wood and stone."

See and no forget to put a wee drop of hot water in Tatty's milk at night: it is lighter for the stomach.—M. P.

Via Bon Compagni, Roma,
March 190–.

Dear Christina,—The weather is much the same as what it is in Edinburgh, Portobella, and district at this time of year:—whiles it keeps fair; and whiles it pours with rain; but as long as the earthquakes keep off, I'm no caring. There was a good shower this morning, but it faired up sudden-like, and out blinked the sun as hot as summer. I stuck my head out at the windy to smell the rain (the windy-sole is pure marble), and I got a fine view far and near. Not so bonny as what we see from the top-windy in the Terrace, away over the Firth to the green hills of Fife—I'm no saying that—but bonny for a foreign land. The Principe Bon Compagni's Villa is exackly opposeet; a self-contained house, with eight statutory figures on the top with nothing on, but clean—I will say that —Rome is a clean place in the way of smoke-reek. The gairden round about the villa is just

overgrown with trees, and you never saw the like of the flourish on them, parteeclarly the lily-oaks! and the camelias are full out under the trees; and the rain-drops were prap-prappin' on them like diamonds from the sky, as the poet says. Away west there's a hill they call Monte Cavo, a very neat shape, like North Berwick Law; but it is mebbe higher, because there's snow on the top yet.

Our ladies were away seein' the Pope on Monday afternoon, dressed all in pure blacks, with black lace veils over their heads, like nuns; it set them no bad.

I went down to the chapel too, for the sake of the hurl, and there was a Popish lady with us carryin' dizens of wee images and a good few rosemaries to be blessed by the Pope. They're awfu folk for gettin' theirselves blessed. Miss Jean says you'll never can get any ill from the blessing of a good man, but the way that beast James has been carryin' on ever since *he* was blessed is no chancy—mind you, the cratur understan's French—he does that!

Last night at the back of eight, I heard Miss Thomson crying "Prommeny, James, prom-

meny!" which means "Away you go for a walk," and sure enough away he goes down the stair with Gemma, to get a bit run: she's the housemaid. It was nearly half an hour before they came back, and Gemma said she had had a job seekin' for James; and little wonder, for, when I went out to the post, the dog was sittin' waitin' at the door on the bass-mat, and Gemma was seekin' him in the arms of the lift-man—no a very likely place, for the poor beast canna abide Joe Vanny—no him.

There was a terrible crowd getting in to see the Pope, and it was everybody for hisself, and de'il tak' the hindmost. The sojers were the queerest tickets you ever saw, with bunchy red and yellow breeks, cut in strips. I am told their uniforms were designed by a gentleman that was something in the pictur line: dear peety me! could he no have stuck to the pentin'! Mitchell-Angelo was his name: no an Edinburgh gentleman: so no more at present, from—Yours truly,

MARGET POW.

Via Bon Compagni, Roma,
March 190–.

Dear Christina,—I got a fright to-day with Miss Celandine tellin' me that she was sure my tendency to ombongpong was increasing. Mercy me! I was feared I had got a hidden disease in my inside that I had never notticed! but she said that she only meant that I was getting fatter.

Rome is a healthy locality, but there is a deal of a queer disease they call tonsures going about; it generally attacks the head—men's heads parteeclarly—it must be a sore trouble. It's queer that none of the folk in Scotland has it. Castor oil is a grand thing for the hair. When I was a bairn at Carldoddie, my mother used to put castor oil on our heads every Sabbath morning (there were seven of us); it was a general custom in the village, and the grand folks that used to bide with the Laird for the shooting said

they were kept away from public worship on the Sabbath-Day because they could not abide the smell of it. "What various hindrances we meet, in coming to the mercy-seat."

We have been to see St. Peter's, which is the principal Established Church in the place: but it is a Catholic Church, mind you; fair rideeclous! Miss Jean says it is not very old, any way they've not got the pews putten in yet. It is a goodish-sized place, bigger than St. Giles's, I will say that; but there's no much comfort about it. They were singing in what they call the Gregorium chapel, and no a few of the priests were as ombongpongy as me. Miss Jean told me that they were singing the Psalms in Latin—such a carry-on! When I thought on the folk in Carldoddie Church singing "O send Thy light forth and Thy truth" (Psalm 43, verse 3) on a Sacrament Sunday, to the tune of "Invocation"; the men first—"My harp," and then the women—"My harp," and then all the folk together loud—"My harp I will employ, I *will* employ," I wondered that Italians would put off their time singing Psalms that nobody

could understan'; but "ye mun hing as ye grow."

I will not attempt to enumerate the tombs we saw. Although not so plentiful as in Westminster Abbey, still there's a good few of them, all the choicest saints being, appearingly, in their graves. The last of the Stuarts lies cold and dead in a strange land, and John Knox is buried somewhere too—I canna mind where.

After we came out of St. Peter's, Miss Celandine was set to go and get her new gown tried on, and nothing would serve her but that Miss Jean would go with her. After Miss Celandine was tried on, Miss Jean was tired, and wanted away home, so I went with her in a carotska. Miss Celandine bade me come for her to a Church near hand that she wished to see; (I'll wager there's a Church in very near every street in Rome!) she said I was to come to the West door, and she would meet me there. Well, away I went my lea-lane, after I saw Miss Jean settled for a rest, but, by the time I had got to the appointed Church, I couldna mind which was

North, South, East, nor West, and there was doors round and round. First I stood a whilie at the front door. Then up came a grand gentleman in a cocked hat and a sword danglin' at his side, and says he in some foreign language, (I suppose) for I didna ken the words, "You're no allowed to stand here more than one hour at a time." "Mercy!" says I: "You're welcome," says he, and away I went to the back-door. I hadna stood there long before anither gentleman came by and looked at me: back he came again, and says he, "Ye better either gang in or come out." "I'm waitin' on a lady," says I to him, but he lifted the curtain at the door, and waved his hand, and bade me go in to the body of the Kirk. I went in a wee bittie, but when I saw the smoking insecks, I fled like a brand snatched from the burning. Once I was safe out, I thought I would try another door, and no sooner was I settled than Miss Celandine came fleeing round the corner like an antelope, real glad to see me. She said she had stooden *hours* at the West door, like the boy on the burning deck, and

she gave me his whole history on the road home. Puir young gentleman; if he had fled like me when he felt the smell of the burning he would mebbe have been drowned.

See and screw down the gas tight when you go to your beds; the wastry of gas that I see going on in some folk's houses is lamentable. —Believe me, yours truly,

MARGET POW.

VIA BON COMPAGNI, ROMA,
April 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—They have been busy thorough-cleanin' here, and no afore it was wanted: but what do you think for? because the priest was expeckit to bless every room in the house; did ever you hear tell of such a set-away! I am thankfu' to say that I was out when he came, no being habitted with siccan popish plots. Miss Jean told me when I came in that he had strinkled my room with holy water. There was a kind of a

damp smell, but I've not taken the cold—no *yet*, anyway.

The house is not half cleaned: the fuff under the beds is a fair disgrace, and I canna keep my hands off it, although I'm no expeckit to do more than attend on the young ladies; and the carpet in the drawing-room is just thick with thrums. Would you believe that dust-pans are made with long shanks in Italy, to save the servant-lassies bendin' their backs! I hope they'll no be introjuced into Scotland. You needna think that I'll bring one home to you and Merran—no likely!

Miss Celandine says I am to be sure and tell you about the eight-legged chickens of Italy. That's just her joke. The chickens have no more legs here nor what they have in Scotland, England, and elsewhere; but, when the dish gets the length of Miss Celandine she says there is aye nothing but legs in it—and mebbe it's true enough, for it's the very same way when it comes to the kitchen.

This is what they call Holy Week, the same as the Episcopalians keeps in Edinburgh, but totally different: I am sure I hope our

young ladies will never take up with any of the rideeclous capers we've seen this very day. It was in a great big Church they call San Giovanni Laterano, and a priest sat in a confessional-box, no unlike the box the watchman sits in when the street is being mended, and touched the folks' heads with a thing like a fishing-rod; them kneeling a wee bit forrit. Miss Jean said he was giving them absolution; anyway he very near raised an old lady's bonnet off of her head, his stick becoming entangled in the trimming. It was a plain bonnet too; her last summer's one done up for every-days, I would jalouse, with gauze strings, and a flower at the left-hand side, all black.

We saw three bairns—wee tots, no above six years old—two wee lassies and a laddie, playing themselves at the same thing. Down they plumped on their knees in a row, in front of a confessional-box; but they were ower far off, and the priest inside told them to come nearer. They warstled on their knees till he could get at them, and then he touched their heads one by one. Up they got quite pleased,

and slipped away behind a great big pillar; we saw them keekin' round to see if anybody was notticing them, and away they went to another confessional to play the same game! Poor wee things, it was a fair divert to see them: but the next priest suspeckit what they were after, and he wagged his finger to them to come and speak, and told them no to do that again; he was a cheery-lookin' gentleman—stout and ruddy—it will likely be an easy life. It must take a deal of faith to lippen to yon rod-thing, but every herring must hang by its own head.

The bonniest place I have seen yet in the antique city of Rome is the Protestant Cementery. They say there's no treat that Scotch folk enjoy better than a funeral; and I'll admit that they are fond of a daunder in a cementery, and what for no?

Miss Celandine went with me last Sabbath-Day. It's a fine large place, and many a stranger is lying fremd and forsaken under the shade of the Cypress-trees; and fine large funeral-lookin' trees they are, very well suited to their poseetion. I notticed the name of

John Smith, Sculpterer; Smith is a well-known name in Edinburgh. If folk had the sense to bide at hame, there would be no call for them to lie lonesome in a foreign cementery. Miss Celandine read out of the guide-book that the Poet Shelley said "It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place." It minded me of the man that went to see the new addeetion to Kilmun kirkyard, and when he saw the green brae, and the flowers, and the Holy Loch shinin' down below, and heard the robins singing, and the lapper of the tide on the shore, his heart melted within him, and he said, "I would like fine to be buried here, if I'm spared."

Another poet had on his grave, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water"; nae doubt it would be before ink was invented; I dinna mind his name.

We had a sit-down for a whilie on a wooden seat, and Miss Celandine took the opportunity to cast up to me that when she was a bairn she aye thought that Warriston cementery was Heaven, and that it was all my fault!

It seems that, when her poor Grandpapaw died, I told her that he had gone to Heaven (as was only respeckful to the family), and then, appearingly, I took her a walk to the cementery, and showed her the big monument, and told her he was *there*: she says it gave her a perfect scunner at Heaven.

Cover *comfortably* doesna mean drowned: no wonder it's thin: I wish I was home in my own kitchen.—Yours,

MARGET POW.

P.S.—A telegram has come from Sir Ian to inform the young ladies that the Baby has duly arrived in Cavendish Square, mother and child doing well. It was born the day before yesterday.

"Few are thy days and full of woe,
Oh man of woman born."

It is a girl. Name "Jean," after our Miss Murray. Gentlemen are terrible wasterfu' with telegrams, but it seems that you get the words cheaper when you take them by the dizen. There was twenty-seven.—M. P.

Via Bon Compagni, Roma,
April 190–.

Dear Christina, — If we're spared, we purpose to shift next week to a town they call Florence. Miss Jean was set to board with nuns in a convent there—seven francs a day, real cheap—but I'm thankfu' to say Miss Celandine put her off it: she said a monastery at the same price might do, but a housefu' of women she couldna abide, she's had enough of it here: so we have got rooms near the Dwamo. It will be the river, no doubt. "Florence seetiated at the mouth of the River Dwamo"; I think I mind something about it in the Jography-book we had at the school. I hope it will no be damp.

Miss Celandine has lifted her love; she's not thinkin' of marryin' on a Cardinal now, it's to be a Bassaleery. That's what they call one of the regiments here; and a daft-like squad they are, their hats fleein' with cock's feathers, and wide blue cloaks hangin' round

about them—pale blue, mind you, a colour that would spot easy—no the thing at all for rushin' into battle, what with gettin' between their legs, and haudin' in their arms, and hangin' round their necks fit to choke them: the Hielanders would make short work of them I'm thinkin', if they were gettin' near-hand.

I'll be thankfu' when we get the parcel delivered that Mrs. Scott gave us to take to her good-brother in Florence, for it's been a fair torment. There's woolly things in it, and the paper burstit before ever we got the length of London: and by the time we lighted down out of the carriage at Cavendish Square, a long knitted leg had cruppen through, and was hangin' down very near to the pavement. Mr. Scott is a tall man. We've put a brown paper over the outside of the parcel now, and tied it up with twine, but I wouldna wonder if it burst again; wool's an explosive thing, mind you.

Miss Celandine's been at me with what they call "The Visitors' Book," and she told me I was to write down my name, age, address,

occupation, and remarks. Allow them! they're no feared! if I was to put down all the remarks I've made to mysel', and whiles to the dog, James, I wouldna need to come back here in a hurry. Miss Celandine told me to take a look through the book, and I would see the way to do it. Her own name is the very last. She has put "Celandine Murray"; and, down below, like a text, "Purr when you're pleased"; it's no in the Scripturs. The one above was just "Miss Murray," and the address in Edinburgh. There was a terrible grumblie lady here for a two-three days—they called her Miss Villars. She was aye findin' fau't with one thing or another. I looked up the book to see what she had putten down, and I was dumb-foundered to see "Miss Villars, London. 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.'" My certy! Philippians iv. 11, and a neat hand-of-write too. There was no age to any of the folk I read, so I didna put mine's. The American ladies put down a very nice prescription, viz. —"We have spent nearly three days in Rome,

and have no hesitation in saying that it is the most elegant city we have seen yet." But they've no been in Edinburgh. So at long and at last I tried the pen on an old envelope; then I put a piece of paper under my hand and wrote down, "Mistress Marget Pow, maid to the aboves, address do." So there's me, likely to be known far and wide through writin' my name in Visitors' Books! Little did I think when I got my first place at Mrs. Murray's (£10 a year, and find your own tea and sugar), that I would end by towering through the world as a kind of lady's maid: but it's a waesome job to be far from your ain country, and I'm fain to get away home again. This will be the last letter you'll get from Rome, so see and no loss it.—Yours sincerely,

MARGET POW.

HOTEL, FLORENCE,
April 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—You will see by the address that we have moved from Rome, and glad was I to see the last of it. The town was just cram-full of edifices, and I'm perfeckly worn-out, and thankfu' to get away to a place where there will be nothing to see. The packing was a job that I'm no likely to forget in a hurry. The young ladies has collected as muckle trash as would fill a kist, and Miss Celandine was aye bringin' me one thing and another that she couldna get into her own box. The last thing was a stone sculpter of a person wantin' both the head and the tail, and the weight of I dinna ken what. Says Miss Celandine, "Take great care of that, Marget, please, for it is mebbe two thousand years old." "It's more, I would think, by the dirt o't," says I, very short-like, and I was just going to plump it into the basin when Miss Celandine let fly such a squeal

that I stopped in terror. She was feared it would spoil in the washing, but I dinna think that even the Lady's Lily-white Laundry could hurt *it*. For peace sake I wrapped it round with a flannen petticoat, and put it in my box beside a green china dish, a bust of a sheep's head, and a pictur of Saint Sebastium that Miss Jean couldna squeeze in.

I had to take out Mr. Scott's parcel to let the bust in, and carry it in my hand the whole way to Florence. We'll hand it in to-morrow, if we're spared; we have not been out-bye yet.

I didna buy anything in Rome mysel' except a pirn of cotton, No. 30 white.

You will no doubt be surprised to hear that there was a Scotch lady in the train belonging to Edinburgh: we had a fine collogue together. There was a terrible crowd at Rome station, and I couldna get a seat beside the young ladies, so I just ascended the first carriage I could see. There was only three ladies in it and a blackaviced-looking man that never spoke a word. He was mainly occupied with eating oranges all the road from

Rome to Florence. At first I was feared it was a smoking-carriage by the smell, but there was nobody smoking when I got in. No sooner were we safe away from the station than the lady opposite me got out a cigarette, lighted it with a match, and commenced to smoke the very same as if she was a man! Did ever you hear tell of the likes of that? But just you wait. She said something to me (I was sittin' exackly opposite), in a foreign tongue, but I didna lift her, and she went on smoking away. Efter a whilie she took the cigarette out of her mouth and began to whistle "Lord, a little band and lowly." It was the sweetest music I had heard for many a long day; it minded me of the bairns singing their hymns in the Sabbath-school far across the water. The tune melted my heart and set my tongue going. Would you believe that the lady was a minister's widow? She had been away to Jerusalem helping to convert the heretick Jews, and here she was going away home for a holiday, and speaking about Jaffa and Jerusalem the same as Edinburgh folks

speak about Portobella and Joppa! We had a most improvin' conversation; she was a fine speaker, and started on Predestination and Freewill as soon as her cigarette was done. Nothing dauntened her; she had chapter and verse for everything. The other ladies was Americans, and they joined in the conversation too. I couldna make out what religious seck they were members of; but I would think they belonged to the Atheist Church, they were that contradictious and ignorant. But mebbe they were not *joined* members at all. Any way they were ill-grounded in the faith—no firm hold on the devil or original sin at all, poor things; but they had the gift of the gab; I will say that. The noise they made, all speakin' at once, was like to deave me, and I was kind-of glad when Florence appeared on the horizon. The Scotch lady shook hands with me, real kind and free, and wae was I to see the last of her cheery face: I hadna had such a Christian conversation for many a long day. The lady said she hoped we would meet again, if no in Edinburgh on the other side of Jordan, and, says

she, "I have enjoyed our chat; you and I have something in common," alludin' to original sin, no doubt, for the American ladies was free from any sic thing, by their way o't.

See and no aye be shakin' your duster over the windy when posty is comin' bye the house: there's back windies.

My old spentacles has cast up where the hielandman found the tongs.

My kind regairds to your mother.—Yours truly,

MARGET POW.

HOTEL, FLORENCE,
April 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—Mr. Scott lives in a flat. We took the parcel to him this forenoon. The house is no in a genteel locality, and just as well, for the brown paper was jimp, and it opened out a good bit and let through a white tape string. Miss Celandine was mad, and

even Miss Jean said she would have preferred a parcel with some sense of decency.

Florence is a fine flat town, I'll no deny that; but if Edinburgh was laid out as flat, it would be bigger nor Florence. There are bonny hills round about, with self-contained houses strinkled on the braes, very like Corstorphine. We had a drive in the afternoon in a public park they call the Casheeny. We hired a machine by the hour—a sort of an open cab—the chairge being much the same as we pay in Edinburgh. The horse was much the same too, but worse :—no a stylish shape; high at the head and tail, and an awfu hollow in its back. But I'll warrant you never saw a horse in Scotland with pheasant's feathers stuck in its head like a tirara, and a red worsit tossel dangling under its chin! Poor beastie, it took its time, and I enjoyed mysel' fine. Miss Celandine said she didna care for funerals as a rule, but she's aye for driving like Jehu. By the time we got home it was one hour and forty-seven minutes, chairged two hours. Cabmen are terrible imposing—they are that.

The porter here—he's an oldish man—can speak English fine through having resided in Glasgow a good few years. He is married on a Glasgow woman; poor thing, it must be a waesome change for her. He started by remarking "Good morning," or "Fine wezzer," but foreigners are quicker at makin' friends than Scotch folk, and when the young ladies were in at the tabbledot (that's what they call pot-luck), we had a chat thegither at the front door. He aye sits there in a kind of a glass box to watch the folk come in and out, in a blue coat with brass buttons, and a white shirt.

"I haf one wife," says he.

"The usual number," says I, civil, but distant-like.

"Zee usual?" says he.

"Number," says I, but he didna lift me, so I changed the subjeck.

"I hope your wife is very well," I says.

"Much veryweller, thankyou," says he to me.

Appearingly she had been ill, so I asked him if she was lying. Would you believe that

he was black affronted! He thought I meant was she tellin' lies! Foreigners must be awfu slow at the uptak; and him been in Glasgow for very near seven year. When I got him pacifeed (it took a good whilie), he made out to say "She not in bed lies," and invited me to my supper at their house next Setterday. He goes home every night late, but on Setterdays he gets away soon. It will be a fine ploy, and I'll be glad to meet with a Glasgow woman: I hope she's no had time to take on the Italian accent.

Miss Jean has been lookin' kind-o' dwobbly the last two-three days. She reads over much; I'm a powerful reader mysel', but I dinna approve of young folk aye puttin' their eyes out over their books. I'm thinkin' mebbe she needs strengthening, and I'm going to try some stuff that I saw well recommended in an adverteezement at the end of the guide-book. It said "Absolute Specialities for stomach sufferers, and Convalescent People. Double Beefsteak, the best and most triumphing reconstituent, preferred by Stomach sufferers. To sale at the behind-coming shops." One

of the shops mentionate was Danieli Calderai. I'll warrant that's neither more nor less than Daniel Calder in plain English, so I'm just goin' away out to get some of the double beef-steak from him. Miss Jean says she's no a stomach sufferer. But you dinna ken; she might be if the disease wasna arrested before it began.

Never speak to me about the blue Italian sky, and the fine steady weather. Losh! it can rain in Italy just the same as it does down the west coast of Scotland: you can see that by the size of the umberellies the folks carries. Miss Celandine says they let on that thon out-sized umberellies are for the sun! But I'm no sae blate. What do you think I saw up in a shop-window in plain English? No less than "Specialities in water-tight collars and cuffs." It's no a wee shower that runs down your neck and up your sleeves, I'm thinkin'.

The Dwamo's no a river at all, it's just anither of these great big Churches; and, if you'll believe me, there's *more* picturs here nor what there was at Rome! When I went

with the young ladies to a place they call the Pity Palace, thinkin' I would see a grand king's house, here's one room after another full of nothing but picturs :—no beds, tables, chairs, nor nothing. It's terrible to think of the valuable time that's been putten off pentin' picturs. And there was a good few statutes that minded me of the Irishman that said he put on as little as he could avoid : I didna see how they could have avoided putten on less.

When we got through with the Pity Palace, which was no before my corn was neither to haud nor bind, Miss Jean says, " Now we'll go to the Oofitsie." " What will that be, if you please, mem ? " says I. " Oh, Marget," says she, " you *know* it's a picture-gallery." I was like to drop, when I heard it, and glad was I when Miss Celandine said *she* wasna for any more picturs for a whilie, and away we went home to our teas. There was an American lady standin' at the door, and she started to ask me questions. She wanted to know if the young ladies had seen the Dellybellyarty. " No that I'm aware of, mem," says I. " They

must go," she says, says she, " it's one of the most elegant picture-galleries in Europe." " Mercy on us ! " says I, " how many more are there ? " She smiled kind-of pitiful like, and said there was a good few. She told me she was feeling worn-out and nervous, for she had been " drifting around trying to appreciate things " for some months. Poor lady, I was wae for her ; it didna seem to go with her heart. But I had to go and get off my boot, so I will draw this long letter to a close.—Your affectionate old friend,

MARGET POW.

HOTEL, FLORENCE,
April 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—It's just much about the same, thenk-ye. Miss Celandine brought in the news yesterday that she had seen written-up in a shop near-hand " Leather Conveniences for the Feet," so away I went to see if I could get a pair of fine wide elastic-sided boots.

Preserve us all! It was footstools they were alludin' to! However, when I was out with Miss Jean to-day, we passed a bootmaker's with "Lasts for elegant shoes for the lame, and persons suffering with their Feet," in the right-hand window, so away we went in. After a parleyvoo with the man, I came away home with a pair of soft cloth boots, buttoning up the sides with six buttons each, and I'll no deny but what they're kind-o' comfortable. They were marked fifteen franks, but I got them for 12s. 6d. of our money: it would likely be a Spring Sale, and they would be rejuced. Hand-sewn, too. Miss Celandine says *she* wouldna call them exackly "elegant"; but what with the weather turnin' warmish, and me aye on my feet lookin' at auld picturs, statutes, and edifices, I'm no sae parteeclar about bein' elegant.

Our young ladies are greatly admired on account of their light hair and their red cheeks. I aye thought Miss Celandine's hair was red, but, says she, it's no—it's the colour that artists love to paint. It's funny that none o' the artists she knows has pented it;

but she says it's because they're no old masters yet. Miss Celandine has aye an answer. And the way she wins in and out of places is fair rideeclous—nothing dauntens her. There's no a shut door but what she'll get through, if she's that way inclined. But she was very near bein' obligated to spend the night in what they call the Spanish Chapel, with her nonsense. It's a place all over with coloured picturs, opening off a great big Church, through a sma' door, and down a stair; and she said that a person of the name of Ruskin had let on that it would take six or ten weeks to see it right:—just a haver; but she wouldna come away when the other folks had had their fill, and so Miss Jean and me went into the Church to wait for her. What we saw there put Miss Celandine fair out of our heads. The whole Church was pitch dark, but just the end where we came in. Near the door there was a Chapel, like, all lighted up with numerous gasoleeries, with hundreds of candles in them—a fearfu' expense. They were sweein' the last one up to the roof when we got in. Then the ministers appeared,

arrayed like Solomon in all his glory, with wee laddies in white silks attendin' upon them, carryin' candles. Perfeck wastry, and it as light as day already: but I'll no deny that it was a fine sight.

When the music began, I very soon found out that I had heard the same tune afore, and in a Scotch Church too! When once you introjuice Popish hymns, the same kind o' tunes will not be far to seek. Mind you, it's a strange thing—there's me singin' the same hymns as the Frees, and the same tunes as the Foreign Catholics, and all of us expeckin' to go to Heaven if we're spared. It appears from the Scripturs that there will be fine music there, and I hope the Psalm-tunes will no be negleckit—it wouldna be like a Sabbath wantin' them. But you would think David would see to that, parteeclarly "Few are thy days and full of woe," that I aye hushed the bairnies to sleep with lang syne; Paraphrase No. 8.

I was tryin' to mind what tune it was, when there came a rap at the wee door we came in by. "Miss Celandine," says I to

mysel', for I ken her knock fine. She didna wait a meenit till she rapped again, loud. Miss Jean looked at me, but we sat quiet, no likin' to disturb the pious congregation. At last when the noise was attrackin' folks' attention, a stout gentleman, dressed all in black and white (Miss Jean said he was what they call a Dominicum—the minister's man, no doubt), went forrit and opened the door, and real mad he looked, as well he might. But when Miss Celandine slippet through, lookin' as mim as a May puddock, he smiled at her, quite pleased-like. Miss Celandine got a fine fright, though, and I hope it will learn her to keep aside Miss Jean and me, and no to be so positive. She says she aye bears in mind what Shakespeare said: *i.e.* "Still in thy right hand carry a sixpenny-piece to silence envious tongues."

I would give twopence for a plate of porridge, and a pennysworth of sweet milk. Folks speak about Mackarrony—nesty slippery stuff. You've a work to get it lifted off the plate, and when once it's into your mouth, it's down before you've eaten it.

Miss Jean is lookin' some better, thank-you. My kind regairds.—Yours sincerely,

MARGET POW.

HOTEL, FLORENCE,
April 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—Setterday was the day I was away to my supper at Mrs. Oppenrieder's house—her that is married on the hotel-porter here. He's no an Italian though, but just a German from Swisserland. And who do you think *she* is? Jeanie Macgregor that was cook to the Miss Marjoribanks, next door for seven year, before she went back to Glasgow! Her and me used to be real chief. She's stouter, and no sae red in the face. She had on deep blacks; her good-mother died no lang syne: the skirt was made fullish, with three folds round the foot. Black jet buttons. She looked no bad in it.

We had our supper at the back of seven, and Jeanie asked the blessing. She started

with " Oh Thou that carest for the sparrows and feedest the young ravens that call upon Thee "—I dinna mind the rest, but she brought it out fine, and didna omit to mention " the stranger at our table." That was me, and she couldna have felt more dumb-foundered to see me there nor what I was mysel'.

Mr. Oppenrieder was very hearty. " Put yourself at home," says he to me, as soon as we opened our eyes, so I spread my hanky on my lap (I had on my Sabbath gown), and we started. We had a thing they call " lemm cottlet "—no unlike mutton chops; and freetatar, and chelly-roll mit cream. I understand Mr. Oppenrieder's English fine, but he didna take *me* up very quick. Jeanie had to tell him what I was saying in German more nor once. Figure her speakin' German like a lady! It sounded fine—just the same as Glasgow but different words. We had an improvin' conversation about pancakes, &c.; there's a deal to be learnt from foreigners: and Jeanie and me had a haver about the Miss Marjoribanks and the Edinburgh folk.

She has got a good down-sittin', and a kind man. He told me on the road home that his wife was a sparefu' woman, meanin' " savin' " no doubt : she was aye that.

Jeanie gave me a packet of Lux home with me to wash my flannen petticoat with, and I've been readin' the bit *Scotsman* that was wrapped round the outside. It was all about the New York Stock Market—live stock appearingly. There's been a terrible fight there between bulls and bears : I wonder they wouldna think shame ! I aye thought bull-fightin' was carried on in heathen lands like Spain, and no in Christian countries. It said that the bears exerted pressure, and, efter the fight was over, " they were sitting on all speculative stocks." No doubt the poor beasties was glad to get a sit-down anywhere. The bulls went into a pool. There was nobody killed.

There's not a bird in Florence except the pigeons round about St. Dwamo's Church : the folk has eaten all the sparrows—nesty greedy things ! But mark you, there'll be a famine among their cats, and *then* they will

mebbe find out that "What's in the wame's not in the testament." They will be wishin' the spruggs back again, if it's for nothing else but to remind them that the Lord careth for sparrows: many a time the chirpin' craturs has been a comfort to me.

It's a strange thing that the doos round about the Church are the very same colour as the edifice—black, and white, and yellow—it looks bonny when they flee up. Mebbe it's a miracle, but I'm no sure.

So no more at present from yours etc.,

MARGET POW.

P.S.—The porter gave me a fine fright yesterday. I was asking him when the train went to a place the young ladies wanted to see. "Zee train," says he, reading a printed nottice on the wall, "goes at two and forty-four; you will be all right if you go half an hour ago." "Preserve us all!" says I, "and us no away yet!" "Do not lament," says he, concerned like, "zee train he go at two and forty-four; you and your ladies go at two

and fourteen: it will be a very pleasant liddle dribb." So we were time enough, but he gave me a fright, mind you.—M. P.

HOTEL, FLORENCE,
April 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—You will have heard folks say "Miracles will never cease," meanin' that there's never been any since Scriptural times, and that they are no very likely to happen now. Well, I am in a poseetion to bear witness to the performance of a miracle in this very town, having been, this very day, to see the place where it happened.

It was in the via del Orto—a poor-like street near the San Frediano gate. Three orphan lassies used to bide in No. 10 (the number is on the door yet—so folks can say what they like). They worked for their living at sewing and knitting, and kept themselves respectable. But bad times came: the merchants that bought their goods failed, and they could get nobody else to give them work.

So the poor helpless lassies began to sell their bits of things, and even the very flower on the windy-sole, to get food. At last there came a morning (it was the 1st of May) when not a crust was left in the chest where they aye kept the bread. It was a queer place to keep it, but mebbe they had sold the crock. There was only one thing left to sell, and that was a large Crucifix hangin' on the wall. I dinna approve of them mysel'; they're ower like graven images for me; but Catholic folk are brought up different. The orphans minded that when they were wee bairns, their father used to hold them up to kiss the feet of Jesus, and they couldna think to sell the image they had worshipped many a time. So down they went upon their knees in front of it, and the eldest sister put her arms about the two younger ones, and prayed the Lord to send them bread. It wasna a printed prayer, I'll warrant, and Miss Jean says she doesna think there's one ready-made in the book; any way the lassie stated the case plain and clear.

Exackly as they rose from their knees a rap came at the door below the window: one

of them looked out. (Mind you, we saw the very window!) There stood a weary dusty-foot, with a pale douce-like face, and he begged for a bit of bread.

"Alas, we have none," said the girl, "or we would gladly give it to you: our chest is empty, and we have just been praying to the good God to send us food, for we are starving."

"Look again, kind maid," pleaded the poor stranger, and just to please him, the girl went to the chest and lifted the lid. Lo and behold, it was cram-full of new bread! no a yesterday's loaf among that batch, I'll warrant.

With a cry of joy and wonder the lassie ran to the window with a loaf in her hand for the beggar; but he was away from the door. Down the stair she ran, and lookit east the road and west the road, but nobody was to be seen. Some folk say it was an angel, and some say it was the Lord Himself; my Aunty Mary used to say "God's help is nearer than the fair e'en," and it would ill set us to believe less than foreign Italians.

The Crucifix has been well guarded, and it is exheebited to the public in a Church they

call the Carmine, in this very town of Florence, every May-day. And that's no all, for on the same day every year, there's a Feastable held in the room where the miracle happened; and outside the house there's a nick in the wall, with a kind o' copy of the Crucifix, and of the chest that the loaves were kept in. A lamp aye burns before it night and day. Mind you, it will use a deal of oil, and Miss Jean has been tellin' me that it's the poor women round about that buys it. It's real good of them, though what call they have to think that saints and angels are parteeclarly set on lamps and candles, I'm sure I dinna ken. So, you see, you needna say that miracles will never cease after that.

Miss Jean has been readin' a book called *Roadside Songs of Tuscany*, and what do you think she has found in it? The very hymn I used to make her and Miss Celandine say when they went to their beds, viz.:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

I canna mind where I learnt it mysel', but little did I think that I was nourishing up the innocent lambs on Popish doctrines. Miss Celandine says it was a daft-like prayer to teach *her*, for she aye thought she would mebbe die in the night, and she's never done it once, nor Miss Jean either. It's as well to be on the safe side, though.

You and Merran can stick to the Psalms of David.—Your old friend,

MARGET POW.

HOTEL BARKEROLA, VENICE,
May 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—We stopped at a small town on the road here. It was a place where they make sausages :—no Cambridge, though ; that's a town in England. It began with a B, but it wasna Beef : I canna mind the name of it the now. But I'll never forget the place, for I was very near bein' left behind in a foreign land, and all through takin' chairge

of a bird in a cage for an Italian lady in a red and green strippit shawl.

We had to wait twenty meenits for the train, and the young ladies went out to take a daunder on the platform, leavin' me and the traivelling-bags in the waiting-room. In came a stout lady with a bird in a cage, wrapped up in paper and string. She sat a wee whilie, and then she rose and came forrit, and set down the cage on the table, and, says she, "Will you keep the bird for me till I go and get some coffee?" She spoke the Italian language, but I kenned fine what she wanted, for she pointed to me, and the bird, and her, and the Restorong a twa-three times. Says I, "I'll do that, mem," little thinkin' what was to befall, and away she went.

Scarcely was her back turned when in rushed one of thae fellies in blue peenies. He lifted the bags in one hand, and the cage in the other, clapped the shawls under his oxter, and "Come on," says he. "Set down that bird," says I. "Come on, wumman," says he. "The bird's no mine," says I, "it's belongin' to a lady that's away

gettin' a drink of coffee," and I gruppit the cage. He let go, and the paper screeded up the middle. " Ye're a thrawn old fool," roars he, in a temper. " Naething o' the sort," says I, stiff-like, and off he flew like the very mischief, leavin' me my lane wi' a strange bird in my hand. The poor wee cratur was frichted, and I was cheepin' to it, when in came the porter again in a terrible pavee, cryin' " Come on, wumman, or ye'll loss the train ! " and with that he up with the cage and ran, and me after him.

When I got outside the waiting-room there I sees the train standin' on the ither side of the rails, and Miss Jean and Miss Celandine with their heads out at a windy, cryin' " Run, Margaret, run ! " The gaird was clashin' the doors, and the engine was snortin' for breath (and me too) : my certy ! I can tell you I ran, and thankfu' was I when they hauled me into the carriage, and the blagyard in the blue peeny handed the bird in after me. I couldna speak, but Miss Jean said, " No birds to-day, thank-you," and gave the scoundrel a doosoor.

The last I saw of the sausage-place (I've minded it now—Bologna—I kenned it began with a B) was the man lauchin' on the platform, and the leddy with a crowd round her on the ither side. It was a wee bird, gey nervous-like, but it was very near lossin' me the train. It come over me after that mebbe the Italian lady was takin' the bird home for her dinner, and I wished I had hauden on to it. But Miss Jean won't traivel with fowls of no kind, she says, no even parrots, so it was better to trust the wee cratur to a higher power. "Confide ye aye in Providence, for Providence is kind." Mebbe it's eaten by this time.

Bologna was a dull-like town: the pavements had stone arches all over them to keep them dry. There was a Cathedral, and a Pictur-gallery. I didna nottice a sausage-maker's shop; I never was out-bye. Venice is a celebrated locality; I'll give you all parteeclars in my next.

My kind remembrances to all inquirin' friends from

MARGET POW.

HOTEL BARKEROLA, VENICE,
May 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—I had only been in Venice a jimp week when I felt a kind-of nesty smell in the house. I thought it was likely conneckit with cats—water-cats, mebbe—but they've been tellin' me that a queer smell is what Venice is celebrated for. I would think they might get something uncommoner to be proud of! but, mind you, I'll no deny that it's strong. You will have heard of civic cats? It might be them. Or musk rats.

There's a good few canals, and hundreds of gongdolies fleein' up and down them, but I've never went in them but once. That was when we came out of the train at Venice station. The land ended there, so we had to go in a boat or drown. I can tell you I was in a fine fright. I aye hated boats—nesty dangerous things. The man that rowed us had a red sash round his middle, tied at

the side, and whiskers. He never sat down the whole time, keepin' a look out for danger. Every now and then he gave a most awsome howl; it curdled my very blood to hear him. Miss Jean said it was to let folks know we were comin' round the corner; as if it was any business of theirs!

Thankfu' was I when we landed at the hotel-door, and no sooner did I set my feet on Terryfurmah, as they say, than I made up my mind to *keep* them on it as long as I bide in Venice. I've no objections to a Bus, but gongdoliery boats I winna lippen to. When I go out I just take a bit daunder by the back Road to St. Mark's Square; it's the biggest bit of dry ground in the place, appearingly. What for do they no irrigate the canals, and make roads for folk to walk on?

I've seen the Dodge's Palace, and the Bridge of Sighs; it's poor after the Forth Bridge.

Don't ask me any more about the Churches. How can you have a right church with no pews, an' no foot-board, an' naething to lay down your Bible on, and your hanky, and

your glasses ? And there's no right ministers ; just foreigners dressed up like play-actors, and wee laddies in red gowns and white muslin peenies carryin' candles, and lettin' fall the waux round about them on the floor—a perfeck caper. I'm no sure if they have elders or no ; but, any way, there's a minister's man in St. Mark's, and what do you think he did ? He came round to take up a collection when we were standin' in the place : Miss Celandine and me gave him a copper each, and he put them in the box he was carryin' for the purpose. But, when he saw the bit silver Miss Jean gave him, he didna put *it* in the box—no him ! He said he was a gey auld man, and no very weel ; and it was raither much to put into the box ; and he would just keep it to hissel' : and with that he wrapped it in his hanky, and thank-ye kindly !

There is nothing more of importance to nottice, and so I draw to a close.—Your affeck. old friend,

MARGET POW.

HOTEL BARKEROLA, VENICE,
May 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—As I mentioned afore, the principal Estaiblished Church here is called St. Mark's. It's no a bad size, but ill-lighted. We were there this forenoon, no at a diet of worship, although they say there's no fewer than three or four every day, but just to see it, like.

When we were daunderin' about in the half-dark, I spied a basket standing on a big tomb-stone. A neat wee basket it was, with a high handle over the top, white net curtains drawn all round, and a wreath of flowers for a decorement. And what do you think was inside? A bonny wee bairn, no any more than a week old! It minded me of Moses in the Bullrushes, poor lambie. I was lookin' about me to see where the mother was, when up there came a laddie in knicker-bockers carryin' a candle crooked, and slaisterin' the grease upon the floor as usual. It turned out

to be a Christening, and no long after we could hear the infant roarin' like a buckie. At the distance you wouldna have kent it from an Edinburgh wean, but there's no a woman in broad Scotland that would carry her bairn in a basket like a half-dizzen of eggs, or a quarter pound of the best fresh butter, curtains or no curtains. Traivellin' opens your eyes to the defeeciencies of foreign nations.

When we come out of St. Mark's we were attacked by the pigeons, and had a work to win through them. Luckily for us they spied an American lady with a bag of peas coming forrit, and we escaped when they werena lookin'. It seems that they're protected by the laws, and fine they ken that. I'm doubtin' it will no be long afore they'll need to keep a pollisman at the church-door to convoy folk safe through them—they will that. I like fine to hear a cushie-doo croonin' in a wood in the summer-time, but yon greedy, grumbly, pushin' things are a fair obstruction.

We visited a place called the Leedo yesterday, going by a steamer, and returning by the same means. It is an island. We walked

across it (me in my new boots), in about an hour or thereaway, sittin' down on a seat by the roadside to get a bit rest. Miss Jean was awfu keen for me to go; she said I would be standin' on the shores of the Adriatic. Me! I would raither have been sittin' on Portobella sands, and I didna see much odds betwixt them. If I had kent that the Adriatic was just a water like any other sea, I wouldna have went. Miss Jean maintained that it was a kind of a blue *she* never saw before; and Miss Celandine thought it had a sort of a dyed look; young folk are aye for novelties. We went into a Restorong on the pier to get a piece, for it was near one o'clock. They gave us wee sandwitches with green stuff in them, like what the gentlefolks has at efternoon teas. Maist rideeclous! when you take a bite there's a long white string, with a wee green leaf on the end of it, hangin' out of your mouth, like a canary at the chickweed, and no much nourishment in it, I'll warrant.

The weather is maist unseasonable—perfeckly warm, and it only the end of April!

Venice is real bonny in the dark, when you

canna see right. I stood a whilie at the front door last night, when the young ladies was in the drawing-room, with my Shetland shawl about me, and nothing on my head but my cap. The sky was bleezin' with stars in dizens, and the gongdolies were sailin' back and forrit on the water, made visible to the naked eye by means of lights stuck abaft the stern. Miss Celandine came to take the air, too, before she went to her bed; and, after her, came two oldish ladies that we've seen many a time afore both in Rome and Florence; but they didna speak—just glowered. It's queer how often we see the same folk; they all go the same road appearingly: but, except they're Americans, they're real suspeecious-like.

I'm away to my bed, so no more at present from yours truly,

MARGET POW.

HOTEL DESEERABILLY, MILAN,
May 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—We left Venice on Tuesday, and thankfu' was I to see dry ground when we landed at Milan station.

I dinna understan' how folks can speak about traivellin' for the sake of variety. It's aye the same thing, no matter where we go! As soon as we've put past the night, then it's off to the cathedral the morn's morn as fast as we can go. When we're through with the cathedral, tombs and all, there's the pictur-gallery standin' waitin' on us. If there's any place else to see, it's the exack spot where some poor lady or gentleman has been burned to ashes in the middlin' ages, or an extry tomb: whiles it's *anither* pictur-gallery. I would like fine to see a neat pollis-office, or a Free Kirk, for a change.

We have seen the cathedral, I'm thankfu' to say—altars, picturs, relicks, pillars, floor, ceiling, statutes, windies, tombs, etcintera.

But I'm bound to say we saw one thing we hadna seen afore, *i.e.* what they call a crib. When Christmas-time comes, it's all lighted up wi' candles, but we could see fine. It wasna a crib at all, but a wax-work of the Stable at Bethlehem, as like as life. The floor was covered with real straw, and there lay the new-born Babe, appearingly about two years old, with bonny, fair, curly hair, and a white silk frock all trimmed with gold spangles and a sash round the waist. The Virgin Mary was kneelin' beside Him, with a blue cloak about her. Joseph was there too, kind-of lookin' on, and the beasts was represented by an ox and an ass very near as large as life, mind you. The star of the East was shinin' up above, but it wasna' very shiny: I would have liked fine to dust it. It was an instructive sight; I aye wondered what like "swaddling clothes" was.

Before we left the Church we sat down on a seat to get a bit rest. Near by there was a decent-lookin' woman sayin' her prayers in broad daylight, with a laddie about eight year old kneelin' at her side. His eyes were

wide open, though, and he soon spied a priest sittin' in a wooden box, with the name over the door. Appearingly he was a friend of he's, for off he flew, and held up a pictur he had in his hand for the priest to see: he had to stand on his tiptoes to reach high enough, poor wee chap. The priest praised the pictur, and had a parlyvoo about it, and then he leaned over the wee windy, and lifted the bairn's bonny face with both his hands, real douce-like, and kissed him as fondly as any father. I doubt Catholic priests are no sae black as they're pented.

The pictur-gallery was filled with the very same picturs we saw at Rome and Florence. Miss Celandine says they're no exackly the same picturs, but just the same subjecks. "It's a' yin," as Mrs. M'Leerie says. There was the thin auld gentleman with a stone in his hand. And the one that's aye taken with his pet lion: the lion was smilin', puir beastie: but they would be tellin' it to look agreeable, no doubt. There was St. Sebastium, too, but he's everywhere—that's the one with the arrows; and other saints by the dizen.

Also Adam and Eve, and the less said about them the better. There was the Deluge too, and a fearfu' rain it must have been. The fishes floatin' about minded the young ladies and me of kippered herrings, for no one have we tasted since we left Auld Reekie. I was aye fond of a kipper; but they're no very fillin'; there's nothing in them but the taste. Speakin' of fishes, there was a neat sma' pictur of three oysters on a plate, set on a table covered with a white cloth; the heel of a loaf; a kitchen knife; and a tallow candle burnin' away for neither end nor purpose. Miss Jean said it was called a pictur of "Still Life." Oysters are quiet craturs—no very active.

I can understan' the foreign waiters fine now. The one here speaks very like Mr. Oppenrieder, only he says "yelly-roll" instead of "chelly-roll." It's quite easy when you're habitted with it.

The next place we're goin' to is Swisserland; it's a hilly country-side, they're tellin' me. The name of the town is Lucerne, and we're to board with two Scotch ladies, the Miss

Farquharsons. Do you mind of two tall ladies that used to visit next door in the winter-time? One of them used to be hurled out in a bath-chair with a Pomperanium dog sittin' on her. Well, it's no exackly them. But *their* sister was married on a Mr. Farquharson (he was a placed minister at Dremside, but they lifted him no very long syne), and *he's* brother was Papaw to the two ladies in Swisserland. It will be a treat to meet in with somebody that can speak plain.

I'm keepin' as well as can be expeckit, thank-ye.—Yours truly,

MARGET POW.

PONGSHONG EDEN, LUCERNE,
May 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA, — We have landed at Swisserland safely. It was a long ride in the train from Milan, through an unjewlating country. What a space the hills takes up! And there's more of them here, and snow on

the top of them yet. We came through a long tunnel called the Sang Gottar : it minded me of the Mong Snee Tunnel—you would scarcely have known the one from the other when once you were well inside.

Swisserland is the place where William Tell shot an apple off his son's head : a daft-like cantrip ; he might have flattened the laddie's nose for life.

We are boarding in the Miss Farquharson's pongshong as per agreement, private sitting-room extry. It's a big house, and there is about twenty ladies and gentlemen in it (parteeclarly ladies), two boys, and a baby in arms, the latter being Americans, likewise their Poppa and their Momma : that's what they call their Papaw and Mamaw. It's a peety they canna learn to speak right.

The Miss Farquharsons are tall and thin, very genteel-lookin', dressed in blacks—no *deep* blacks, just second mournings, like : it'll be for the Miss Macgillvary that used to go out in the bath-chair, poor lady. I doubt they are from the West, for the drawers in my room are papered with a *Glasgow Herald.*

There's no exackly a Cathedral here, and I dinna hear anything about picturs, so we just glower at the loch and the hills, and cry "beautiful!" "Change o' de'ils is lightsome."

There was a celebrated lion died here a while ago, and they've put up a bonny monument to him. It's a statute of the lion hisself when he was feelin' ill. Poor beastie: mebbe it was just as weel that he was taken away. If he was still livin' in the place, walkin' about seekin' whom he might devour, I ken fine he would have galravished me. I never can run when I'm frichted.

There's an Edinburgh faimly here that gets the *Scotsman* raiglar; their table is next to ours, so we hear all the news. Mrs. Balcarres, the Mamaw, is the first down in the mornin', and she aye opens out the paper and starts on the deaths. She's a wee lady, with brown hair and bonny red cheeks, and when she spreads out the *Scotsman* ye canna see her ahint it. But you can hear her fine, and a terrible fricht she gave them all this very morning. "Oh, William!" says she, reading away to hersel' all the time, "I'm awfully

sorry—what a pity! and I saw him just the day before we left, at the corner of George Street; don't you remember? you were with me, only eighty-seven—'in his eighty-eighth year, after a few days' illness——'" They were all cryin' "Who?" at once, but she never let on she heard them till she had finished what she was at; then she looked back, and, says she, "John Smith, in his eighty-eighth year, after a few——" "I never heard of him," says Mr. Balcarres, disappointed-like. "He wasn't cut off in the flower of his youth," says the son—a tall, fair laddie, real fond of teasin' his Mamaw. "Who's dead?" cries the young lady; she's aye the last to come down, and never hears more nor half the news. It turned out to be a gentleman that had been in the Scottish Counties Bank about fifteen year syne. None of them minded on him except Mrs. Balcarres; but she's a kind-hearted lady, and she offers me a read of the paper every day.

There's no more news of importance, so I will now draw to a close.—Your affectionate old friend, MARGET POW.

P.S.—Some things are cheap here: we got a pound of cherries for about 3½d. yesterday, and the gardener kissed Miss Jean's hand and mine's for twopence. The way o't was as follows:—Miss Jean was admirin' a red flower in the garden, and she was keen to learn the name of it, so, when she saw the old gardener diggin' away near-hand, she went to ask him. Back he came and told her all about it, so she thanked him kindly and gave him twopence to hissel' for his trouble. He took off his hat (straw) and bowed down to the ground, and then he took her hand and kissed it as if she had been Victoria the Virtuous. Syne he looked at me and then at Miss Jean, as much as to say, "I'll kiss her too for the twopence if you like," and before I knew where I was he was liftin' my hand to his lips as respeckful as you please! Foreigners are no blate, I'm thinkin'.—M. P.

Pongsiong Eden, Lucerne,
June 190–.

Dear Christina,—We had a treat last Sabbath. We went to the English Church—me and the young ladies—at eleven o'clock, and heard a powerfu' discourse in the English language. The text was in Joel, chapter i. verse 4, viz.: "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the canker-worm eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten." No an easy subjeck to handle, but the minister brought it out fine. He laid down that, firstly, the palmerworm signifeed original sin; secondly, the locust was the sins of youth eatin' up the flowers of virtue; thirdly, the cankerworm was the sins of middle age, eatin' up the locusts' leavins; and fourthly, the caterpillar signifeed the sins of old age, devourin' the wee bit good fruits the canker-worm hadna notticed. "Finally," was a fear-some pictur of the total galravishment of the

sinner; and "To Conclude," reminded us that we were all worms of one kind or another. It was a maist solemn warning, and the collection was to buy new windy-blinds.

Miss Celandine's on the nonsense the day. She says she dreamt the whole night that there was palmerworms in her bed (just a wee bit horsehair stickin' through the mattress); and she aye calls the Miss Farquharsons "the caterpillars" now, for she says they get nothing but the leavins, decent ladies. But the sermon made an impression on her, mind you. Miss Jean told me that when they were sittin' at the dinner on Sabbath night, Miss Celandine looked round about her, and hove a deep sigh. When her sister asked her what ailed her, she said, "The cankerworms have started on the ice." Miss Celandine was aye fond of ice, but even in the midst of feastin' and revelry, the minister's words was soundin' in her ears: well might she cry with David, the Psalmist,

> "My heart unto thy testimonies
> And not to greed incline."
>
> Psalm 119, verse 36.

The furniture here has been bought at an unction; there's 43 written in white chalk on the back of my lookin'-glass.

The house is cram-full of folk now. The fame of the Miss Farquharson's estaiblishment has flown far and wide, and many a beautiful testimony to their Cleanliness, Comfort, and Cooking is written clear in the Visitors' Book, and no a single complaint from beginnin' to end! Miss Celandine says there will be one after *she* leaves, for she's perfeckly determined to tell on the cat. She aye calls him "Sir Having Greedy," but he gets "Catsy" in the kitchen, and Miss Farquharson says his real name is "Munch," for he's all black and white like a Dominicum monk. He gets into our sittin'-room by the windy, and yowls for the cream when the young ladies are at their teas. Miss Celandine brought in three cream-cakes one day, at twopence each, and I put them on a plate for the tea. Losh! when Miss Jean came downstairs they were licked empy, and Munch was sittin' on the sofy in the sun, singin' with joy and fulness.

Miss Jean fair spoils him, and so does Mrs.

Balcarres and her faimly. She got a fright on Monday night, though. They were all sittin' quite calm-like at the table, when, all of a sudden, Mrs. Balcarres put her hand in her pocket, and rummeled in it a wee whilie. Then her face flew up scarlet, and says she in horror, "Oh, William, I've lost my purse! and all my money is in it—and my ticket, and the little gold chain you gave me!" "It may be upstairs," says her husband. "Feel again," says the young lady. "Please don't disturb yourselves," says the young gentleman, no the least putten about, "My Mother loses her purse regularly twice a week." Well, she felt again in her pocket, and she looked under the table; syne she tried the front of her gown, but it wasna there. She was very near desperate, when finally she gave a sigh of relief and rose up. "I remember now," says she; "I always turn my *under* pocket round to the *back* when I put on my evening dress"; and sure enough it was there all the time. "Not lost but gone behind," says the young gentleman, and they all went on with their denners the same as if

nothing had happened. But Mrs. Balcarres got a fright, mind you. I like her fine; she's just the same as me about nesty smells —she canna abide them—and many a pleasant conversation we've had on the subjeck, although Swisserland is far behind Venice that way; there's no the same variety, by no means.

We're "gathering as we gang." Miss Celandine was for buying a wee dog, but Miss Jean and me put her off it owing to the bark, and she's got a musical chair instead. They're one of the producks of Swisserland, the same as cuckoo-clocks, musical-boxes, etc. etc. It's a neat wee chair, and she'll no tell what she paid for it. The back is carved to represent a cubit with wings, sittin' cross-legged, playin' on a mandarin. The seat is just plain wood, gey an' hard, but the meenit you sit down there's a click and a gurr, and away goes the tune. It's an easy instrument to play, and a bonny tune, but I doubt Miss Celandine will soon tire of it; she never could sit long. She says she likes the tickly feeling the music makes inside her, and she's always

going to carry the chair about with her for Miss Jean to get a sit-down at the stations: I doubt we'll soon have a crowd round about us.

I'm real glad to think that we are kind-of on the road home at last; folks dinna ken what home is till once they traivel from it. —Your affeckate old friend,

MARGET POW.

P.S.—I add these few lines to let you know that we have just got a letter from Lady Lindesay to say that Sir Ian has been ordered to go to a place they call Grenoble, on some kind of business. She is going with him, and the three bairns, and the two nurses, and she wishes the young ladies and me to join them there for a whilie to learn them to speak the French better. Michty me! if they could learn Miss Celandine to hold her tongue it would be far wiser-like; there's no a language that'll halt her. I thought Miss Jean would have been vexed, for she doesna do with hot weather, but she seems glad; mebbe she is wearying to see her wee Namesake. Miss Celandine is mad; she says she

can speak the French fine, and she wants home for the gooseberries. I canna deny that I'm sorely disappointed; we'll no be home or Nevermas at this rate; but "things mun aye be some way, even if they're crookit."—M. P.

The Hotel, Geneva, Swisserland,
July 190–.

Dear Christina,—We came away from Lucerne yesterday, at eight o'clock in the mornin' in a terrible pavee, and very near lost the train: Miss Jean had to say good-bye to the cat at the last meenit, and the poor beastie stuck his claws that firm into her dress-sleeve that we had a work to get him unhooked. Miss Celandine said she was tired waitin' on us, and she would just sit down on her chair till we were ready. Off went the tune fit to deave a body, and thankfu' was I when the omnibus came forrit, and she had to rise. The tune stopped as usual; I shut down the

back, and shut up the legs, and tied a good strong cord round it, and away went the chair on the top of the omnibus—but just you wait: let me not precipitate, as the story-books say.

When we landed at the station Miss Celandine was for taking her chair in the carriage beside her, but we had that many things, that Miss Jean and me said it would just need to traivel in the van with the luggage; we were feared it would fall down on our heads and brain us. But mind you, Miss Celandine wasna pleased, and she and Miss Jean were very near castin' out about it. Little did we suspeck what was to befall. For a good whilie *nothing* befell. Miss Celandine, appearingly, was asleep, and Miss Jean was dovering when the guaird came in to look at the tickets. He took his time, us havin' pages of tickets of every hue. He was readin' mine's when suddenly Miss Celandine opens her eyes, and, says she, "He's singing my tune; he has been sitting on my chair; I *know* it!" The felly never let on he heard her; he just hummed away to hisself and

tore bits off the tickets. " Tell him, Jean," says Miss Celandine, real mad, " Tell him he's not to sit on my chair—a great heavy thing like that; he'll break it." Miss Jean did her best to make the maitter plain, but the guaird just laughed and said the song he was singin' was poplar, but there was nothing about a chair in it. Miss Celandine wasna easy pacifeed, however, and, the meenit we landed in this hotel, she untied the chair, and down she sat. Mercy on me! it just gave a fuff and a tick, and stopped! Up got Miss Celandine without one word and sat down again hard and firm (she's a light weight, though): no a sound of any sort seceded. Poor lassie; I was vexed for her. " I'll never hear my tune again," says she, very like to greet; " I *told* you not to put it in the van." Then Miss Jean, *she* began to laugh. She said it minded her of the lady that lost the chord when she was sittin' at the organ ill at ease (it's no a comfortable chair to sit on, I will say that), and she told Miss Celandine that she would likely hear her tune again in Heaven. Perfeck nonsense: and it no a psalm tune or

anything like it. I don't think Miss Jean was carin' very much about the accident, but Miss Celandine was real hurt at it, and thankfu' was I to get them both away to their beds. Another thing that upset Miss Celandine afore ever we left Lucerne was that Miss Jean dared her to tell the truth in the Miss Farquharsons' Visitors' Book. She said we were all Annanniasses and Suffiras, and that we were making her the same, and she would be eighteen in August, and then she would do what she liked. But all she put in the book was her name, and "I never met a more religious cat."

Mind you, it's a fickley thing to tell the truth and no hurt folk's feelings. These Visitors' Books are a fair torment. Miss Jean says she believes they are a remnant of the Spanish Disposition; I wouldna wonder.

And who do you think is bidin' in the same hotel as us? You'll never guess, and I've no time to tell you about it the now: Miss Celandine's wantin' me in a hurry.—Your affeckate old friend,

MARGET POW.

THE HOTEL, GENEVA, SWISSERLAND,
July 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—I daursay no! How could Phemie win to Geneva? *She's* no a lady's-maid; she's just a housemaid "where only one is kept," as the adverteezements say. No, no; it's Mrs. Macrorie, her that's been maid to the Honourable Miss Menzies for ten year and more. And to think that I was in the same house for two days and never kent her! I saw a shilpit bit cratur glowerin' at me whiles, and once I met her in the lobby, and she gave me an awfu stiff-like smile, poor thing—but just you wait till you hear.

Yestreen Miss Jean says to me, "Miss Menzies tells me that you know her maid." "'Deed ay, mem," says I, "I've kent Maggie Macrorie ever since she was a bairn at the school in a peeny." So, hearin' she was in room 103, top flat, away I went to give her a cry in. She opened the door and I kent her fine. "Weel, Maggie," says I, "I've seen

you goin' about this very house mebbe a dizen times, and I never kent ye; figure that!" She snecked the door, and she says sadly, says she, "It's the teeth." With that she took a cup off the mantelpiece, and there sure enough, were thirty-two teeth in two rows, very neat and reglar-like, and as white as snow. So she told me the whole history of them, viz. what with crumpin' peppermint-balls in the Free Kirk when she was a bairn, and what with maskticating tough meat in gentlefolk's houses, she had no more than five teeth left when she took service with Miss Menzies. Latterally the old lady began to cast up that a servant with £25 a year and all found should have more than that to show for it, and advised her to gather up and buy thirty-two new ones. Poor silly cratur, so she did; they pulled out the fixed ones, and gave her the imitation ones home with her in a pasteboard box. They wanted to leave them in her mouth, but she was feared she would loss them. The dentist told her she would be crumpin' toast with them in a wee whilie; the rascal! it's all she

can do to take a bit butter and bread. They've made an awfu odds upon her: when they're out she looks like a canary-bird, and when they're in she minds me of a shark, so she does. She aye keeps them in a cupfu' of water on the mantelpiece; they're no much use, but they're bonny wee teeth. All further news in my next.—Yours truthfully,

MARGET POW.

L'HOTEL AUX JARDINS, GRENOBLE,
July 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—The young ladies settled on this hotel on account of a pictur of it that met the eye at very near every station we've passed for miles around. It was a bonny pictur, I'll no deny that. In the foreground (as the artists say) was the hotel itself, neat and clean-lookin', with green grass all about it; beds of geranums full out; and fine big trees here and there. Away to the right you saw a blue water, with wee bridges over it,

and a lady and gentleman in evenin' dress, fishin' for minnows. On the left side, a machine with a pair of brown horses, and luggage on the top, was gallopin' up to the front door; and a gentleman on horseback was going the other way, with a dog runnin' after him. In the hindground was a row of hills, blue below, with red and white peaks on the top—gey theatrical-lookin'.

Miss Jean wrote about the rooms, and the letter they wrote back had a lot of printin' on it. It said "*Vaste Parc*," meanin' vast park in English, and the young ladies thought that would be fine for the bairns from Cavendish Square to play about in. Also it mentioned "Central Heating," but we'll mebbe no need that, the South of France being counted mild in the summer-time. There was a Garage too, which was a mercy, seein' that Sir Ian is purposing to come all the way from Lyons in a nottymobeel—one of these daft-like machines that go by smell. "Rates of best convenience" was mentioned, but the thing that decided Miss Celandine was what the letter said about Lobsters:—it was in English, as follows, *i.e.*

"Speciality of Lobsters' Tails with Crumbs. Creation of the Hotel." Miss Celandine said that a hotel that could create lobsters' tails must be clean and thoroughly well-conducted; and Miss Jean said that if there was crumbs there would mebbe be loaves, and no these everlasting pettee pangs. I'm wearying for a slice off of a half-loaf, yesterday's baking, mysel', so I am.

Miss Celandine was up at the skreigh of day, and away out to the park to look about her. In less than a quarter of an hour, here she was back again! It seems that she had just walked a wee bittie yont the house when she came to a wire fence, no very high nor nottice-able, but she couldna' step over it. Then she tried the walk away to the water, and she found she couldna' get that road either: so away she went round by the back of the house, but the fence went that way too! There was a man washin' lettuces outside the back-door, and he told Miss Celandine that the "*vaste parc*" belongs to an old gentleman, and he'll no' let anybody walk in it but hisself and his grandchildren! The bit grass in front of the

house is belonging to the hotel, and four green wooden tubs with pink flowers growin' in them, and the graivel walk at the back. Miss Celandine says the Garage is a henhouse; anyway, there's hens in it the now. They'll get a fright if Sir Ian catches them in his machine.

The heat is no confined to the centre of the hotel—it's in every room, and there's nesty insecks they call moskeeties fleein' about and bizzin'.

Miss Celandine is pestering me to take her to the town, so I'll need to conclude.—Your affectionate friend,

MARGET POW.

GRENOBLE, *July* 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—Yes; he was Miss Jean's jo, and she was engaged to him for more than two year before he died; that was three year ago come the winter. Lady Lindesay took me to the cementery on Sabbath afternoon

to see his grave. We were at the Church in the forenoon. They say it was a Protestant Church, but the language spoken was French—just a perfeck haver. We went in the knotty-mobeel. Master Johneen was fain to bide at home. "It's not my Sunday out," says he, when Anne caught him in the garden, "and I don't want to go to the bovering Church anyhow," did ever you hear the like! But when once he was in the Church he behaved fine, and slept like a lamb the most part of the time. The heat was rideeclous. Grenoble is a hot place, and the moskeeties have been very bad; but the weather has been blowy the last week and the wind has shifted a good few of them.

Mr. Erskine was one of those gentlemen that traivel far and wide to discover countries that have probably been there ever since the earth was made without bein' notticed, the folk that live in them no sayin' much about it, for fear of being discovered, and annecksated for the good of their souls. He was a great friend of Colonel Murray's, and far too old for Miss Jean, so he had to wait for her.

Whiles he lived in Edinburgh and whiles in London, but he never could settle right, and wandered about from the East Pole to the West. Finally, what between "Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strand," he came home from Africa with a cold, and never totally got rid of it. He was at Grenoble on his way home from a districk they ca' the Reeviarea, when he died. "A winter day, and a wintry way is the life of man," as the proverb says. He might have kenned that folk that leave their own homes when they are ill often end their days somewhere else. I've seen it mysel' many a time, and well I mind of the man at Inchmakenneth that sold coals and hired out wagonettes, sendin' round a nottice to the visitors in the month of August to say that "in order to meet a long-felt want, he would now keep a hearse."

We went to the cementery by means of an open cab; it was a long hurl, right through the town and out at a gate called the "*Porte des adieux.*" It was a bonny place when we got there, and the gate was standin' wide open. We hadna gone far when we came

to a plain white stone under the blue shade of the cedars with "Arnold Erskine" on it, and not another word but just "Waiting" down below. No Text. Lady Lindesay says that was the orders he left. Miss Jean's blue-bells were lying withered on the ground. My heart was wae for her. They grow round the roots of the trees in the avenue where the hotel is, and, strange to say, you wouldna know them from the blue-bells of Scotland. Lady Lindesay says that Mr. Erskine is in Paradise; I wouldna wonder. When I was young there was only heaven and hell, but he never could settle, poor gentleman.

Miss Celandine is for takin' home a bird with her. I minded her that the canary she had when she was a bairn died of starvation, and that the bullfinch she got after died of what they ca' completion, but she says this one'll no kill easy. She's seen it in a shop; it's black and it speaks. I'll warrant it's neither more nor less than a dyed parrot.

The baby is a bonny, good-tempered wee lamb, blue eyes, and no a hair on her head: Miss Jean's real content. Master Johneen

makes an awfu work with the bairn, and he'll no allow that any other wean could be like it. There's an American lady in the hotel has a baby with her, and she said at lunch to-day, says she, "My baby is as bald as a plate." Master Johneen took her up in a meenit, and says he, haughty-like, "*Our* baby is balder than a plate." He was very near greetin' yesterday because a French nurse showed him a baby with four teeth. Lady Lindesay has ordered a wee blue suit for him from a tailor in the town; the tailor's name is Mulligan; I doubt he canna be pure French, but he'll have the French style mebbe.

Miss C. L. is growin' like her Auntie Celandine; she'll speak a foreign language rather as hold her tongue, and she's aye playin' about with the little Madmozelles, me and the buns (as they ca' their nurses) lookin' on: it's a fair pantomine, and the shortness of the French bairns' petticoats you wouldna believe without you saw it.

It's all very fine for the people at home to be singin' "Peace perfeck peace with loved ones far away," and no doubt you and Merran

are having a grand quiet time, but it's a weary wait we'll have if we bide here till Sir Ian wins away! So I will draw to a close.—Yours sincerely,

MARGET POW.

GRENOBLE, *August* 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—As regairds news nothing parteeclar has come to pass. The town is well enough if it was better arranged. There's a Cathedral and a Pictur-gallery. It's the blowiest airt I ever was in, the wind risin' every day at twenty-five meenits past twelve exack, and the inhabitants wearin' white waddin' in their ears to break the draught. One of the principal inhabitants in ancient times was a gentleman called Bayard, and there's picturs and statutes of him on every side. Another of the nobeelity they've put up a monument to was him that invented kid gloves—his name began with a J or an X, I dinna mind which, "Johnston" mebbe, but

I'm no sure. He is represented standin' firm on a stone, holdin' a glove-cuttin' machine in his hand, life-size. Very naitral-like. When you refleck that we've only seen four kids in the town and two on a hill-side, you would wonder to see the thousands of kid-gloves in the shop-windows. But there's a good few cuddies down by the river, and sheep are prolific on the mountains.

There's a Catholic priest livin' in the hotel, and he's grand at the music. Last Sabbath night he sat down to the piany and played and sang, us sittin' on the verandah outside the windy listenin' to him. It was a slow reverential tune, and he sang it real solemnly in a base voice, but I couldna make head nor tail of the words, them bein' French, as usual in this country. Would you believe Miss Jean was tellin' me this mornin' that it was all about a daft-like King called Daggo Baird, who put on his breeks wrong-side out, and never notticed till a saint came and told him! And me thinkin' it was mebbe a new version of one of the Psalms of David, what they ca' "another of the same" in the book. Strange

to say when we went to a Pictur-gallery yesterday, here was no less than five picturs picturifying the principal events in the career of the same Daggo Baird, and the same saint; the latter's name was L. Waw. The one I liked best was when the King lost his breath on account of bein' chased by a rabbit. The rabbit was in the front of the pictur, brown, as like as life, wi' a kind o' smilin' face, and a bonny wee tail; the King was away on a hill-side, fleein' afore the face of the rabbit. Saint L. Waw was just comin' forrit to see what kind of a pliskie the King was in now; *he* was aye to the fore. Lady Lindesay's tellin' me that there's the remains of a Chapel ereckit in honour of St. L. Waw in St. Giles's Cathedral in the High Street of Edinburgh: it would likely be the Baird family that would put it up: or a descendant of Mr. L. Waw.

We've been to see the oldest Church in France; it's a low flat—what they ca' a cripp—and they say it's been there, off and on, for thirteen hundred year. When we got to the bottom of the area-stair, who should we see but Mrs. Balcarres and her son, speakin'

to an American lady with a pinch-neb in her hand. I dinna mind her name, but she was real taken-up with the aged Edifice, and St. Laurent, and the tombs. Says she, "It is a sweet and solemn thought that the saints are lying all around us, so near and yet so far." "I don't think they can be very near," says the young gentleman, "or my mother would smell them." "So I do," says she, and away she went up the stair and me after her, thankfu' to get the young ladies away into the fresh air afore the germs could settle on them.

On the way home we met a man in the street with sixteen goats and four kids. He was playing a waesome tune on an instrument they ca' "pan-pipes"—a wee whistlin' concern, no like bag-pipes at all: well enough to amuse the goats with, mebbe, but useless on a hill-side; no skirl. The folk in the houses heard it, though, and out they came with a bowl in one hand and a songteem in the other, to get the milk from the fountain-head, like. If they would bring the cows to the doors in Edinburgh the same way, it would

mebbe cure the dairy folk of puttin' in these nesty tewberkewlosies.

Lady Lindesay has been in to tell me that she's taken the rue, and she thinks now that it is rideeclous to keep the young ladies here in the heat of the summer waitin' on Sir Ian. Miss Celandine is that annoyed with the muskeeties and one thing and another that "a' thing angers her and the cat breaks her heart," as the Scotch folk say. She's had a fine walk in the *Vaste Parc* to-day, though; I knew fine that she would win through, sune or syne. Sir Ian was mad. He looked out at the back-windy, and here he sees Miss Celandine daunderin' along as cool as ye like, wi' an auld gentleman at her side, and two young ones ahint her. She said she was lookin' over the fence, and she gave a bit sigh, like, she was that hot; the old gentleman came forrit, and said would she like to enter, and in she went. Sir Ian said he would thank her no to sigh over other folks' fences when she was in his chairge, so she came upstairs in a tirrivee and told Miss Jean and me that appearingly she couldna

call her breath her own, and naething would pacifee her till she heard we were to get away home next week. We are to be a wee while in London to rest Miss Jean, but no in Cavendish Square—it's all shut up. We're to go to a seleck boarding-house that Lady Lindesay knows about.

My kind regairds to all inquirin' friends,

MARGET POW.

150 BLOOMSBURY SQUARE, LONDON,
August 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—Little did I think when I left Edinburgh that ever I would be callin' London near home, but thankfu' am I to say that it feels like it. The language is no that different, although, this very day, there was an omnibus conductor made me get out at a place they ca' "Blahtch," and me on my road to the Marble Arch, ong root for Palace Court, as the French say.

We left Grenoble at five in the morning to catch the train to Paris, and a fine bustle we were in. Maist mercifully the only thing we forgot was Miss Celandine's soap. I very near broke my leg gettin' into the cab : I had my bonnet-box in my hand, and a bag, and a holdall, and my umbrella, and waddin' in my ears, and the wind very near took me off my feet; but I landed in Miss Jean's lap, mair by good luck than good guidin'. No sooner were we safe in the train, than Miss Celandine minded that she had forgotten to buy the bird; sad's her fate! But it didna daunten her; she talked even on nearly the whole road to Paris. I dinna like these quick trains, although I'm no what you would call nervish when I'm in a bus. My grandmother was a terrible nervish woman; she was aye feared it was goin' to rain—I doubt it cast a kind o' a gloom over her life. She would have been one hundred and ten come the 27th of next month, if she had been spared.

This boarding-house is cram-full of ladies and gentlemen from every part of the known world, and texts. There's no a room wantin'

them, framed and glazed. Mine's has two, and a haver about puttin' on your clothes wrong-side out in cloudy weather to show the linin'; but it's no easy to read, bein' high up and grand printin'. As you go down the stair there's a bit about gettin' up every day with a smile on your face; a perfeck waste in a single-bedded room. Miss Celandine is mad because hers is "Silence is golden," and I will say that it's no in the Bible: she says there'll be a text in the Visitors' Book after she leaves, so we'll need to try and no let her get time to put in any of her nonsense.

Miss Jean sent Miss Celandine and me to see the Tower of London this forenoon. Miss Celandine wasna for goin'; she said it was a nesty place—just a mass o' murders. But Miss Jean said it was a disgrace that none of the two of us had seen it. So away we went in a machine they ca' a Tacksie cab, the price bein' written up in a round thing like a clock, and risin' 2d. if you look at it. Would you believe that before ever we were out of the Square it was up to a shilling!

The Tower's a big place takin' it by and large.

Some of the buildings are towery, like the Edinburgh Jail, and some of them are just like self-contained houses. There's nottices up tellin' what the different places are—very handy. One high-up part was ticketted "The King's House," and I must say I was surprised to see a washin' hangin' out (it was a fine day for dryin'): I would have thought His Majesty's flannens would have been done more private-like; and they were no very well done either—far too much pulled to the length. Merino. We trailed through the place where they keep the armour, but the sight I liked best was the Coronating Robes. There they were, full-length under a glass case, the very way that the King and Queen had them on: purple silk-velvet, embroidered with gold and various colours, and edged all round with fur—white, with wee black tails strinkled all over it: I'll warrant that even Solomon in all his glory had nothing suitabler for keepin' the backs of the legs warm. Miss Celandine says that the weather was hot, but you never can tell; it might have turned cold at night. We notticed that the Queen's

fur was a good bittie narrier than the King's, to indentify her, like: there would be a difference of two shillings and sixpence in the yaird, mebbe.

When we had seen the edifices, etc., we were glad to get a sit-down out-bye, on a gairden-seat under the trees. It was real bonny, the sun shinin' bright, and the wind rustlin' in the green leaves. Some sojers near by were doin' steps very neatly, though how they could understan' the bawlin' fellow that was teachin' them nobody could say.

Suddenly Miss Celandine says, "It's a pity we are too late for the execution; I see it took place on this very spot." "Mercy on us," says I, "What execution?" "Mrs. Anne Bullen," she says, as cool as you like. "When was she hung?" says I, all of a tremmle to think I had been so near seein' sic a gruesome sight. "1536," says Miss Celandine. When I counted it up, it was more than 350 years syne! She was a Queen, young and beautiful. I wonder was the sun shinin', and the trees wavin', and the bairns playin' down by the water-side when she laid her head on the

block for the last time, poor young lady! It's a nesty place, the Tower; I was thankfu' to get away back to my denner.

You'll get all further news when we meet. —Yours faithfully,

MARGET POW.

LONDON, *August* 190–.

DEAR CHRISTINA,—Seein' that we've now been very near all over Europe, with the exception of Asia Minor, Corsica, and Sardinia, etc., you will no doubt be expeckin' me to give you my opeenion of foreign parts; you'll be askin' me as soon as I'm back, "What did you like best?" All things in this subloonary world bein' far from perfeck, "No that bad" is the most that mortal man can venture to say while here below. But this I will say:—there's no a street that ever I saw in France, Europe, Grenoble, or Italy, half as bonny as Princes Street, Edinburgh; so you can just bide at home and be doin'. Where could you

expeck to see a grander row of shops with strippit blinds stickin' out when the sun shines hot in the summer-time? And it's no every town that has a castle standin' up on high in the very middle, and a gun goin' off exackly at one o'clock, rain or fair. Mebbe there's higher hills than Arthur's Seat in Swisserland —I'm no denying that there *may* be — but they're dreich and cauld-lookin'. And the Firth of Forth is a bonny water lyin' like silver between the green shores of Fife and Midlothian. Many a time have I crossed it in the Burntisland steamer, and gotten a good heeze on the way, no a few of the passengers bein' sea-sick, and the blind fiddler playin' "By the Banks of Allan Water" to soothe their anguish. I mind him fine: I doubt the Forth Bridge will have spoiled his perfession.

It's a grand thing to live in a land where a' the folks speak plain Scotch. They say Italian is a beautiful language; so it may be to them that understands it. But a'body likes the tongue best that their Minnie used to sing hush-a-bye to them when they were

weans, and it's the language they would be fain to hear when they close their eyes in the sleep that needs no rockin'.

The young ladies have got new hats, and they've given me a new bonnet. London's a grand place for bonnets—mine's sets me fine. Black. It's mebbe ower high; I'm feared I'll look like a Mintocraig Lion in it—but we'll see.

If I'm spared, and it's fair, I'll be sittin' (come Sabbath) in Mr. M'Duigald's Church, with a book-board before me, and a stool to my feet. Thankfu' am I that I dinna worship in one o' thae Romish Basilisk Churches where there's nothing to sit on. When I'm a winged angel I'll mebbe no be carin' about sittin', partly on account of squeezin' the feathers; but as long as I'm just auld Marget Pow, gey done in the legs, I aye like to get a sit-down on the Sabbath.

When I consider, like Paul the Apostle, the perils that we've won through—earthquakes, draughts, and damp sheets; perils by railways, perils by lifts, perils by folks givin' ye bad money, perils by queer smells;

brigands in blue cotton peenies at every station, no to mention chamber-maids aye dustin' on their knees outside the bedroom-door when you're leavin', and you like to fall over them—when I refleck on these things I see that we've been maist wonderfully and mercifully preserved, and it behoves us to show our gratitude by stoppin' at hame for the rest of our days, and takin' good care of ourselves. So no more foreign letters from

MISTRESS MARGET POW.

THE END.

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